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# THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

THE DREAD DISEASE—

*By Kenneth Payson Kempton*

LEARNING METHODS  
OF WORK—

*By Louis Duncan Ray*

A SHORT-CUT FOR  
JOKE WRITERS

*By Stanley W. Stanbery*

WHAT OF THE  
BUSINESS MAGAZINES?

*By Treve H. Collins*

Continuing WEB-WORK PLOT  
CONSTRUCTION

*By Harry Stephen Keeler*

Literary Market Tips of the  
Month — Prize Contests —  
Trade Journal Department,  
etc.

**October**  
**1928**

# THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

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THE STATEMENT of Harry Maule, editor of Doubleday, Doran & Company Magazines, in a recent market tip, that "the Western story has showed a dangerous tendency to become stereotyped," doubtless is well justified.

If so, however, it is the result of editorial taboos and inhibitions, which have certainly had a tendency to direct writers into the safe channels of tried-and-true plot formulas. By the time a writer has had his head bumped enough times, through attempting to blaze a trail of originality, he is pretty certain to settle down to writing as nearly as possible the same kind of stories that he has been able to sell heretofore, and to leave the thankless job of trail-blazing to more inexperienced hands.

Consider the Western writer when he sits down to weave a plot. An idea presents itself—but it won't do because it involves Indians. Another idea—but Mexican revolutions are barred. Another tack involves too much woman interest. The unsympathetic hero is out; so is the tragic ending. The hero who is not an American may be picturesque—but he won't sell the story. A foreigner can't be cast in the role of a villain—because his countrymen might consider it an insult. An "Old

West" or period story—better not take the chance. Humor must be handled as if it were dynamite—for what may bring a laugh from one editor will cause the next one to groan. There must be no hospitals in the story. The slightest taint of unethical methods about the hero—and out he goes.

Most of the above taboos exist in one or more editorial offices—and the list is not half complete. What wonder that the Western writer clings to the old plots and situations, and to conventional characters who have proved satisfactory in previous yarns—and what wonder that Western stories show a dangerous tendency to become stereotyped?

EXTRAVAGANT NOTIONS sometimes gain credence—especially in the writing field. Here is an example, quoted from "The Diary of a New Yorker," a syndicated newspaper column conducted by Clark Kinnaird, who says:

"One popular fiction magazine is written entirely by one man. He doesn't find it a difficult job for he merely rewrites and retitles for each issue a set of stories that have appeared in the magazine every month since it was started. 'They like these stories, so why give them others?' he argues.

"Virtually all of the contents of a group of so-called 'confession' magazines are written by a trio of fictioneers who live in Greenwich Village and hide knowledge of the fact from fellow aesthetes."

The first statement is absurd on its face. Stereotyped as magazine fiction may become, any editor knows that readers are quick to spot too similar stories appearing in successive issues—and when they do, the circulation drops. A system such as Mr. Kinnaird ascribes to the canny one-man magazine editor would put any publication out of business in three months. The statement sounds as if he meant it seriously, but doubtless he is joking. Or else he has heard a distorted rumor based on the fact that prolific writers frequently have two or more stories in the same issue of a fiction magazine, published under nom de plumes.

As to the confession writers, some of them do turn out quantities of material, and there may well be three fictioneers who top all others in production. Certainly we know a wide scattering of authors who do a lively business in confession literature—so these three evidently have not succeeded in completely cornering the market.

OF INDIRECT INTEREST to all writers, and of direct interest to a few, is the increase of the copyright fee from \$1 to \$2, by the recent session of Congress. This was the only copyright legislation carried to the point of enactment.

SEVERAL LEADING MAGAZINES will be published in a new standard size, 8½ by 11¾ inches, beginning with January, 1929. Among those that will change over to the larger page size are *The World's Work*, *Review of Reviews*, *Golden Book*, and *The Forum*.

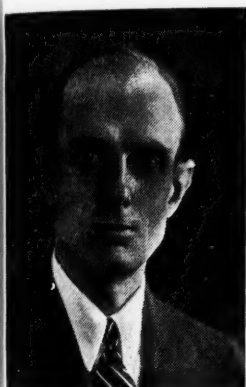
# THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

October, 1928

## The Dread Disease

BY KENNETH PAYSON KEMPTON

*Author of "Second Wind," Popular Writer of Boys' and Girls' Stories.*



KENNETH P. KEMPTON

HERE are the symptoms:

Patient realizes that for the past two or three weeks he has been snatching mentally at phrases, in reading or in talk. "Drums of Destiny"—a title, must write it down. "Marise Barrett," "Martin Conway"—a character name, must

write it down. "Malabar and Calicut," "Table Bay," "Luggers' Lee" . . . Patient feels that his head is filling up with these glamorous tags.

Also, patient has been finding material in the newspapers. A ship unloading \$15,000,000 in gold bullion. A circus side-show hidden among New Hampshire hills. A submarine rammed, sunk, its crew entombed alive. With each find the red light goes on in patient's head, his scissors clip. The steel drawer marked "Start Here" is crammed to bursting. Life is real and earnest.

In short, ideas have been coming with such a rush that patient has been tempted to stop the story he has been working on and tackle this or that new thing. He resists temptation, however, until the job is done and despatched; then upon the following morning he charges into his workshop glowing with enthusiasm and filled with deringdo. He is ready to *create*, and the new car is as good as in the garage.

What will it be? he chuckles. The sea story, he decides. Its first paragraph has been running through his head for a week.

Theme: revenge for an injury committed by unsuspected third party. Scheme: the injury; the chase, with complications; the meeting at last; the fight; the revelation; the laugh. Characters: "Martin Conway," thus and so; "Gene Rood," thus and so; the girl, "Marise Barrett; and the third party, old Tench the shriveled looking clerk, the cackling plotter with the crumby eyes. Scenes: the counting room, at sea for the mutiny, and—er—a key off the Bahamas for the climax. All set!

That first paragraph clatters merrily into history of literature. Patient sits back and reads it over. Twice.

Funny thing, he muses. It sounded great as it ran through his head for the hundredth time last night. Whereas now—not so hot, not so hot.

The doorbell rings. It is the mail, but patient decides he is not going down. He goes down and receives a few bills and one of his own 9x11 manilla envelopes all torn and bent. This holds his last sea story . . . There is a polite letter of suggestions—there would be, he grunts, just as he is getting into something else. "Take out a couple thousand words, but fatten up the plot. Start with the end and work the other way. Get a stronger climax. Your hero is unattractive; give us somebody to root for. And how about a little setting?"

WELL, patient asks himself, shall he dissect the corpse or return to the infant? The corpse, he decides—and returns to the infant.

That first paragraph stares at him. It looks like a schoolboy's first plunge. It doesn't start anything, hasn't the remotest appeal to anybody but a psychiatrist, and contains a split infinitive right in the first line.



He decides to let it go and push on.

But how? He has got to introduce Martin Conway (Drat him and his revenge obsession! He's unattractive, that's what), and this Gene who looks like a villain but isn't, and that rat Tench. And at the same time he must work up the setting (That's right, how *about* a little setting, anyway?) and the girl ought to be coming along, too. Now, how on earth is he going to get in the setting and introduce those three absolute morons and the girl with the queer name, and get Tench to slip in his foul play that Martin thinks Gene responsible for—*without* letting Martin (and the reader) see the whole thing? Would it maybe be better to start with the fight and work the other way? How about?—and what about?—and why and where and which?—

Suddenly it is borne in upon patient that this story does not matter. Not a tinker's dam. No sir, patient resolves, the very world isn't going to stop rolling to hear this story. This story is a tissue of transparent lies.

The sheet of paper bearing that first paragraph is ripped from the machine, received silently by the waste basket. Patient sets his teeth and determines to try something else.

He goes over his notebook. He rejects the college crew story, for he sees it will be sickeningly hackneyed. He rejects the derelict schooner, found unmanned save for the skeleton stretched on the cabin table, as much too blood-and-thunderly; the reader is going to spot that skeleton as a deliberate plant, the instant he sees it. He rejects the golf story; it is built on coincidence; golf balls don't bounce off trees into holes more than once in a century, and making one do so is distinctly not the way to purge readers through pity or fear—except possibly pity or fear for the author.

"Well, look here!" patient addresses himself truculently, "where is all this stuff I had ready to shoot, anyway?"

He turns to the "Start Here" file. He thumbs the clippings. Good stuff, good stuff, he reflects—all of it. But what to tackle first? He has just selected one, determined to pin his faith to it and make it go, when a thought turns him cold.

There was an article in *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* by Mr. Robert Thomas Hardy.

Something about plausibility. Sound sense, patient had judged upon reading it. Its point was, patient recalls, that things found in the papers are never plausible.\* And plausibility is the root-stem of fiction.

Patient now realizes that he is completely surrounded by material no whit worse than what has been food and drink to his imagination many times in the past, but that he cannot bring himself to regard any of it with confidence. It is not yet ten o'clock, yet patient is very weary—complains of headache, cold feet, and an all-gone feeling. The very thought of going through the old process of thinking out a story—getting deeply into it, making it fit, making it run, making it live—gives patient a distinct sense of physical nausea.

Suddenly it is borne in upon him that nothing matters. Not a tinker's dam.

Patient has the dread disease. And he knows it.

**P**ANIC grips him, and he sits dizzily staring at his crammed file. Occasionally in the past, when ideas came slowly and editors seemed unintelligent, he has had a disturbing glimpse, a chimera or hallucination, of a barrier standing before him somewhere in the remote future. With every sale the chimera would fade, recede; with each rejection it advanced and grew clearer. Today and now the vision is directly before his eyes. It is a concrete wall about fifty feet high, very massive; on it are words painted: THIS IS WHERE YOU STOP. HA! HA!

Doggedly patient shakes out of his coma. Unwisely (as in the case of many other diseases) he determines to fight this thing.

He turns to his manuscript record and notes with rising confidence the number of stories written, proportion of sales, the total profits for the past year. He refers to a few of his printed stories and glances over them.

At once his spirits fall again. These stories, he sees clearly, are pretty awful. It is beyond him how any editor could pos-

\*Note to the ladies and gentlemen of the clinic: Of course this was by no means the point of "A Memorandum on Plausibility." In his present disturbed mental state, patient only thinks it was. We are watching the course of a disease, not stating facts.



and sense, possibly have wanted to pay for and print this balderdash. In disgust he puts away again his published works.

Again unwisely, he picks up and reads some stories by other men, his successful competitors. And disgust turns to indignation.

How do they get away with it? patient challenges. Look at that—mere chit-chat, tasteless as cold oatmeal! And the man actually works the mistaken-identity gag! Hero thought it was his bosom friend who had wronged him, whereas in reality—Oh, this is too much! patient snorts. Don't tell me the editors never buy names! Here's proof for you. Of course, the fool gets a laugh now and then. But laughs are cheap. And his girl, Marise what's-her-name, is rather cute after all. But if the sap thinks that a cute girl and a case of revenge based on mistaken identity and a laugh or two make a story—Well, dog-gone it, patient muses, he did think that, and for all practical purposes they did make a story, didn't they? It's—it's enough to make a man sick!

The truest word our patient ever spoke. The disease is now in crisis.

In angry despair he abandons the morning's work and, for want of anything better to do, goes to shave.

The act of shaving is a great, though underrated, boon to mankind. It makes you look at yourself, not as a person but as an object. No man can regard himself long as an object and continue to take himself seriously.

And now to patient, shaving, a thought comes—a sentence by somebody that fits his case. He dashes back into the shop and paws over his books. He finds the sentence in the preface to "Nostromo":

"After finishing the 'Typhoon' volume it seemed somehow that there was nothing more in the world left to write about."

Intensely interesting, hqw sometimes a very minute amount of the proper drug can stimulate and revivify! Patient's eyes dilate as he reads. A moment ago he was panicky, wretched. As he now returns to shaving, heart action quickens and strengthens perceptibly, and he strikes up a tremulous tune.

For the simple, candid words have given him a new look at existence. He realizes that Joseph Conrad once suffered from this disease that is upon him, suffered at a time

when his greatest achievement lay just ahead of him. Indubitably, he reflects, others have had it too, and survived to produce more and better things. He doesn't of course know the ratio of recovery, but it is clear that on the evidence the hardest-hearted actuary would not deny him a chance. And that is all he wants: one chance.

The crisis has passed. Patient is still a pretty sick man, but he has that priceless medicament, the will toward health.

That afternoon he slings a book into his pocket and goes off for a long tramp. For what, he has asked himself, would the doctor do to me if I were physically sick? Wouldn't he stop all my usual activities and make me rest my body? Just what I'm going to do for my mind—provided I have one. (The afterthought showed a tendency toward relapse.)

AS he strides along he lays out a plan of campaign. No more work until it looks like play. No thoughts, even, of writing—that is going to be hard, so habitated is he in glimpsing names, episodes, sentences that phrase a thing neatly; but it is going to be done by shouting "Shut up!" at himself as soon as a writing-thought tries to wriggle in. For there are wounds in his head that must be healed, and rubbing won't do it. Again, he is going to have some fun. Going to the movies, the theatre, a concert; going to play golf, squash, bridge. Going to do all the things that he has been sternly denying himself. And no bounds will be set on this orgy; the orgy will last as long as he pleases.

At this point, thoughts of bills and the new car intervene. Patient grows cold, totters on the verge of relapse. But brisk air and exercise have started good work. He achieves a laugh. He maintains that the old car is good enough. And as for the bills, they will just have to wait. Would creditors come 'round if I were laid up with scarlet fever? "The bills," he repeats aloud, "will have to wait."

He returns to the campaign. He is going to start every day with a glass of lemon juice! For, he reflects shrewdly, there may be something more than mental in this ailment. And he is going to do the radio exercises with the rest of the family, too. And he is going to set a limit on smoking, and stick to it. Selah!

Patient has reached the hills by now, the hills dark-clothed, placid, perdurable. Below him a river glides curving between banks of dark foliage, and beyond and above the sky is blue. His writer's vision leaps at the prospect, his mind begins to grope for words to phrase it—and he shouts "Shut up!" and sits down on a stump. He pulls the book from his pocket.

It proves to be Whitman's "Leaves of Grass." Queer stuff, patient discovers—harsh, bruising, unrhythmic verse; and yet he sees a largeness in it, a fierce love of living that sends prickles along his spine. He begins to read Walt's superb arrogances, aloud—for one can't think elsewhere while reading aloud:

I loaf and invite my soul,  
I lean and loaf at my ease observing a spear of  
summer grass . . .  
The pure contralto sings in the organ loft,  
The carpenter dresses his plank, the tongue of his  
foreplain whistles its wild ascending lisp,  
The married and unmarried children ride home to  
their Thanksgiving dinner,  
The pilot seizes the king-pin, he heaves down with  
a strong arm,  
The mate stands braced in the whale-boat, lance  
and harpoon are ready . . .  
The jour printer with gray head and gaunt jaws  
works at his case,  
He turns his quid of tobacco while his eyes blur  
with the manuscript . . .  
The quadroon girl is sold at the auction-stand, the  
drunkard nods by the bar-room stove . . .

This man is a prophet, patient murmurs delightedly; and is lost again.

Speech is the twin of my vision, it is unequal to  
measure itself,  
It provokes me forever, it says sarcastically,  
*Walt you contain enough, why don't you let it out  
then?"*

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-  
work of the stars . . .  
And the tree-toad is a chef-d'oeuvre for the highest,  
And the running blackberry would adorn the par-  
lors of heaven,  
And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn  
all machinery . . .  
And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sex-  
tillions of infidels.  
"Earth! you seem to look for something at my  
hands,  
Say, old top-knot, what do you want?"

There is no longer light to read by.  
Patient is laughing softly as he closes the

book. The pulse is noticeably stronger, and while walking home, healthily flushed and with more buoyant step, hungry and feeling at peace, he makes a mental list of the books he is going to read, now, at once—just because he wants to.

Patient is convalescent, but happily doesn't know it.

**D**AYS pass and the shop is untenanted, its door closed. Patient is engaged in doing all the things he decided to do when he found he had one chance for recovery. All those and more.

The old car (and patient discovers she runs right sweetly, after all) takes him off for days at a time, and he sees many new sights, and many old ones: ships docking, a cider-mill, games in progress, cities filled with ugly and beautiful people and machinery, a granite quarry, a logging camp. . . . He sternly repels the desire to take notes on these activities, and whenever a writing-thought wriggles he cries "Shut up!" and thinks of something else. He finds that he is having to do this less and less often; he is glad, for bystanders have been amazed. He is talking with many people, but he scoffs at the notion of remembering what they say.

He has found a new pleasure in Bridge. He is reading a great deal. He laughs much at the movies. His golf has improved perceptibly, so that he takes a handicap-ten man snugly into camp. No vacation, in short, was ever a tenth as much fun, for this orgy carries all the wicked delights of thievery. And he begins to suspect that it isn't, in the long run, going to be—But patient is not daring to let himself suspect a thing. Thievery.

Thus in due course there comes a morning when, nothing else pressing, our patient wanders up to his former workshop and peeks idly in. It seems a goodish place—a little dusty and shabby, littered with stacked books and papers left about, filled with sunlight. It occurs to patient to clean up the shop. He sits down at the "Start Here" file. He will start there.

For, he tells himself, what a mess of junk are all these clippings! Bah! Crutches to support legs ever weakening! And he begins ruthlessly to pull them out in handfuls, cast them on the floor.

Then a disturbing thought intrudes. After all, stories have been built on these things in the past—a good many stories. Should I discard them? Mightn't they come in handy some day, if I decide to go back to writing?

In doubt patient turns to stare bemusedly out a window. And a phenomenon occurs.

A car roars by the house—a car with two registration plates. Not, of course, two sets of plates from different states, but two plates of this state *with different numbers*.

Absurd! patient mutters. It couldn't be. But it was, he is perfectly sure. He saw the front plate as the car approached, "203-964," or something quite like that. And as it passed his eyes followed it out the corner window and he saw its swiftly receding rear. And there hung another plate with a different number, only five figures.

And there was a face in that car, the face of the man driving. He hadn't any hat on, and his face looked gray and oddly twisted. . .

Now for what conceivable reason could a man do that? True, nobody would think of looking at the rear plate having seen the front, or the front having seen the rear;

everybody would assume that the two would be the same. Unless you happened to be driving, yourself, down a hill, and this car was following you close, and you happened to see the front plate in your rear-view mirror; and then the car passed you and you happened to look at the other one. But that wouldn't happen in a month of Sundays. For all practical purposes that man with the gray face was two men. He was driving two cars. Now why?

Patient starts. Suppose . . . "Ha! that's it!" Suppose . . . and suppose . . . and *then* suppose . . .

THE clippings have fallen out of his slack hands. Without knowing it he has moved over to the typewriter, pulled off its worn cover, and sat down staring owlishly at the wall. Eyes fixed, his hand reaches into a drawer, a sheet of paper runs almost of its own accord into the machine. He sees nothing, hears nothing, as his fingers begin to move. A gorgeous fabric, nameless but immense, tangible, resistless, is pouring like folds of bright smooth silk into his head.

Patient is cured.

## Learning Methods of Work

BY LOUIS DUNCAN RAY

IF a writer plans to follow the pen as a vocation and not an avocation, one of his most important problems lies in learning how to work. Many writers who have arrived are in the habit of regarding their labors much in the light of a business engagement. They rent space in office buildings, and perform their writing there, not disturbed by interruption. Their hours are set, usually short, but extremely regular. They cover their period of four, five or more hours a day, and then devote the remainder of their time to non-literary matters, such as correspondence, suggestions to editors, discussions with publishers, shop talk with other authors, proofreading, research.

Productive literary labor is unlike physical labor. Physical labor may be performed

as circumstances demand. The mental labor of a producing writer is subjected to rigid habitude after a few weeks of continuity. If a writer gets in the habit of doing his writing during the evening or night, he may be practically ever afterwards forced to carry on at that period, if he expects to do his best work. So a writer in the early stages of a professional career will do well wisely to choose a program, and inure himself to certain habitual hours.

This is aside from his method of writing. Many writers prepare their first drafts in leadpencil on cheap paper, holding the pad on a drawing board, while they sit in a comfortable chair. Some are lost and unable to work if they do not have sharp pencils, while others use a fountain pen. Many writers



employ the less laborious typewriting machine, and usually have a favorite that is in the last stages of decrepitude, with which they would not part for anything.

All these habits are immaterial to the output, but the particular habit is important in that it may be a burden in after years, for it cannot be broken to advantage. Some care should be taken to prevent the formation of prejudicial and inconvenient allotment of the day. When a desirable program is chosen, let it be followed.

The routine production of material under identical and unchanging conditions is the best environment for a writer who plans to labor exclusively in story production, as after a time the established habits themselves aid in the processes of invention and story development. That is to say, the mental machinery that has been trained to labor four or five hours a day, or to turn out two thousand words, or to prepare twelve pages of manuscript, tends to work more and more smoothly under regularity of habit. There can be no waiting for the mood known as "inspiration," in the case of the professional writer.

Nothing is quite so attractive as the avocational pleasures of preparing stories to sell, even after some effort. But the professional writer has a much harder time. He is compelled to labor by the clock's inexorable hands, and many writers dislike and dread their daily session with the pen or machine.

ONE of the most important essentials for the professional writer is the necessity of producing volume, steadily, and selling his product. He has a continuous process to maintain. There are his usual stories, and probably a novel in hand, and the labors of endeavoring to mend persistent unsalable pieces that have been around the markets for months, so that they may become vendible. The economics of writing demand that every unit that a writer has tackled be transformed into a check, with the spiritual benefit that revision to the point of salability is a moral triumph for the author, and a betterment of his personal technique.

The volume that is required as a standard infers speed in production, it being assumed that the writer has a full command of English composition, and that he is not hampered by the typewriter or the pencil in his

work. Consequently, if it is possible, a writer may be able to have a variety of work in hand, and may accustom himself to multiple production. For purposes of illustration, let this be understood to be a novel in process, a story of a few thousand words in hand, an old story for revision. The novel is a long, sustained development with a certain atmosphere that should harmoniously be maintained from the beginning to the end. The stories are each supposed to be *sui generis*.

PROBABLY the schedule of the writer would call for preparation of a complete chapter of the novel in first draft, in harmony with the previous material. Next would come the story. Immediately the novel chapter had been completed, the story would be continued from yesterday's leaving-off point, and four or five episodes added until the writer reached a temporary *impasse*. In most cases, it does no good to stare at the typewriter. The remedy is to fix in the mind a clear picture of the situation as developed to the point of difficulty, and as clear a picture as possible of what is next desired. The story is then promptly dropped, and the work of revision of the black sheep that refuses to lure an editor into giving a check is taken up.

The sticker is read over critically. What is wrong with it? There is evidently a serious lack in the human-interest of the story, a fault in the development, a possible insignificance of theme or denouement not in keeping with the promise of the opening and title—the reader is disappointed in some way. The author, therefore, casts his critical eye on the brain child, looking for these faults. He discovers it at last; the story as a whole is too thin, too watery, too faint—not full and rich in vitality of human emotion. The cure is within his reach. He clips away parts and rewrites in vital dramatic action. He cuts out and shortens passages that appear to drag. He retells by inference what he told once baldly in direct prose. He has a brilliant thought in treating the manuscript at a certain point, and writes this in. Then he revises and rewrites the whole on its eight or ten pages, making the story a transformed thing. It goes out once more, under a new title, and, let us hope, finds a haven with the very first editor.

The writer takes up his previous story that stuck so abominably. No. He hasn't

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any solution yet. He puts it away. Above all, he doesn't worry himself over it. What he wants is some clever idea that will carry the story onward just at that point, and he has hopes that it will come. But he must get another story in hand to replace the missing and delayed story that is partially completed.

Here is a production method for him to start a new story. He has no inkling of what it will be. But he must work quickly in order to keep pace with the passing days. So the author takes to the typewriter once more and writes a dramatic passage about somebody in emotional distress, introducing properties, mentioning people, narrating an unexpected incident that is out of the ordinary. The author is very careful to put suspense into the entire passage, which is that somebody who is in a series of contacts with other persons hinted at is about to take some step, the prospect of which stirs tremendously the person about whom the author writes. This may be a gambler, a college professor, a girl confronting a terrible choice of alternatives. At any rate, the material is emotional, about an ominous but unknown procedure that cannot be avoided, and properties, akin to the properties that embellish a stage at a play, are mentioned by name.

**WHY** does the author select this material? Because all this paraphernalia is the paraphernalia of dramatic and emotional output. Somewhere in the combination lies a tremendous story, overflowing with heart interest and even sobbing with emotional possibilities.

The next thing that the author does is to write a conclusion of a story. This conclu-

sion shows all the characters in changed relations. One or more of the properties is again mentioned, inferring that the particular piece of inanimate matter was a means to effect the change in characters and contacts.

The author now compares these two pieces of matter. There is the hint-filled, vague, ominous, mysterious five hundred words of random opening, all crammed with dramatics. There is the concrete half dozen short paragraphs of the characters expressing surprise, disclosing themselves to the others, mention of the engagement of one to the other, or the marriage of one to the other. There are a dozen ways clearly visible to the author by which the characters in the beginning could resort themselves to the new relations at the close. Instead of one new story, the author has a dozen possible ones, a dozen themes, material on which to base a novel, or material to be pruned to a single effect to produce a short story. He has by a trick produced for himself a drama-filled skeleton for a story, including plot, ending, and theme. He has actually too much wealth of material to use.

Therefore, he sketches out his choice of pattern for the new story, starts it, using his original five hundred words as an emotional guide, and rapidly develops his manuscript.

This is the working method of a professional writer, done without brain cudgeling, voluminous notes, cabinets filled with newspaper clippings, or the other equipment. He writes about human hearts, day in and day out, five hours a day. In a day or two he has a blinding flash of inspiration, and finds just how he can carry forward his story that "stuck" on him. All's well that ends well.

## A Short-Cut for Busy Joke Writers

BY STANLEY W. STANBERY

**SOME** humor writers have complained to me that the bookkeeping involved in keeping track of hundreds or thousands of contributions requires so much time that their production is seriously curtailed. This statement was made recently in a letter from the editor of a well-known magazine. I once experienced the same difficulty, but I devised a system that has

proved to be a tremendous short-cut through this irksome situation, in my own case.

When a group of pieces are returned to me—usually I send eight to twelve at a time—I immediately place a small serial number on the back of each one with a lead pencil. My packet record, which I shall explain shortly, shows from which magazine the articles are being returned and I give them the

number of that publication. I have each of the magazines to which I send my work numbered. Here is a sample:

1. Life.
2. Judge.
3. The Saturday Evening Post.
4. The Calgary Eye-Opener.
5. Capt. Billy's Whiz-Bang.
6. The American Legion Magazine.
7. America's Humor.

*Life* is number 1, *Judge* number 2, etc. If I send a joke to *Life* and it is not accepted, when it returns I place a small 1 on the back in the upper left-hand corner, and send it to another editor that I think might be able to use it. If it should go to *The Saturday Evening Post* next and receive the cold mitten, upon its return I immediately add number 3 to its serial number, thus: 1-3. In this way a manuscript bears upon its back the brand of every magazine which it has visited. If it takes several journeys before finding a happy home, it may have as many brands on its back as a runaway steer. For instance: 1-3-2-14-8-7, etc. With this system I can quickly glance at the back of a manuscript and determine all its pilgrimages.

In time one comes to know the number one has assigned to each periodical and is not bothered with looking these numbers up on their record sheet.

I have several manuscripts that have so many numbers on their backs that they look like a problem in quadratics. Yet this does not affect their sale, for occasionally a piece that has seen most of the world, judging from its serial numbers, will hit some editorial bull's-eye and bring in a nice husky check.

SOMEONE is going to say: "Your system may be all right as far as it goes, but it leaves you no clue for tracing contributions that are not reported upon." Very true, I'll grant you. I was early troubled with this same difficulty. If necessity is the mother of invention, I soon became a mother, for I hit upon the following idea of keeping a packet record:

I have a loose-leaf notebook in which a separate page is given to each magazine that buys short humor. At the top of this page I write the name of the magazine, the name of its editor, and its address. The pages are arranged alphabetically, according to the names of the magazines, and numbered like a book. *America's Humor*, therefore, is given page number 1. If I ever rearrange

this system, I'll number the magazines to correspond with the number of the page devoted to them in my notebook. Anyone expecting to adopt this system would do well to incorporate this suggestion.

Each contribution before being sent out is given a packet number. This packet number and the number of the magazine are written in the upper left-hand corner of the return envelope. In my notebook I record the packet number, the number of pieces being sent, and the date on the page devoted to that magazine. Suppose, for instance, I have sent out a packet and it is returned to me. The outside of the envelope bears the packet number and the number of the magazine that is returning it. I have but to open my notebook to the page belonging to that magazine to determine the number of pieces sent. If the envelope contains the correct number I know none have been held; but if the envelope contains one or more less pieces than was sent out, I know that these missing ones are being held and I record the number of retained manuscripts and the date. If a check is not forthcoming within a reasonable length of time, I have all the data needed to make an intelligent and courteous inquiry.

As soon as a packet is returned I immediately set about making any needed changes in its contents to make it suitable for the requirements of some other magazine, and send it forth upon another journey.

If I send a packet to an editor and have had no reply as to its availability at the end of three weeks, I write this editor a courteous letter explaining that on a certain date I sent him so many jokes and wish to have his decision on them. This usually brings a prompt response.

A PERSONAL experience may be cited to lend clarity to my previous explanations. A short time ago I sent *Film Fun* a packet of twelve pieces. On the page belonging to *Film Fun* in my notebook, which happens to be page 13, I recorded the date and the number of pieces. On the return envelope, in the upper left-hand corner, I placed number 10, the number I have assigned to that magazine, and page 13. About a week ago the packet came back. I opened my notebook to page 13 and discovered that I had sent out 12 pieces—only nine had been returned—but the rejection slip made no mention of accepting any. I immediately



charged these three missing pieces to *Film Fun*, with the date. On the backs of the nine wanderers which had been returned, I added number 10 to the serial number. Yesterday I received a letter from *Film Fun* enclosing a check for \$4.50 as payment for the

three jokes. In my notebook I have marked them paid.

This system has proven a boon to me and I fondly hope it will help other writers of short stuff who are burdened with record-keeping.

## Fact and Fiction

BY JOHN ALBERT BUTLER

STRANGE experiences befall many writers who have been long at what is colloquially called "the writing game." William Wallace Cook, author of "Plotto: A New Method of Plot Suggestion for Writers of Creative Fiction," has had his full share of these experiences in his more than forty years of writing and selling fiction. Two of these experiences offer a problem for the best efforts of the trained psychologist. The first problem, as related by Mr. Cook, deals with a sketch which he wrote in the early '90s—a stickful of type appearing in *The Detroit Free Press* under the title, "The Fatal Hand":

"The Northern Pacific Railroad had just been built into Helena, Montana, and I happened to be in the town one evening and stepped into a gambling hall. Burton, a friend of mine, was playing poker with a miner and two professional gamblers. I stopped beside the table and watched the game.

"Cards had just been drawn. Burton, as soon as he had looked at his hand, calmly shoved the cards together, laid them face downward in front of him, removed a notebook from his pocket and scribbled something on a blank leaf. 'Read that,' said he, 'when you get back to your hotel tonight.'

"The play proceeded. Presently the miner detected one of the gamblers in the act of cheating. Words were passed, the lie given. All the players leaped to their feet. Burton, in attempting to keep the miner from shooting, received the bullet of one of the gamblers and fell dead upon the scattered cards.

"An hour later, when I reached my hotel, I thought of the note Burton had handed me. It read: I have drawn two red sevens. I now hold jack full on red sevens. It is a fatal hand and I shall never leave the table alive. I have \$6000 in the First National Bank at Bismarck. Notify my mother, Mrs. Ezra J. Burton, Louisville, Kentucky."

This was the story, Mr. Cook declares, just as he wrote it. All of it, even to the red sevens and the three jacks, was pure fiction. Yet what was the result of the publication of this sketch?

In less than a month the Chicago papers published an account of a police raid on a gambling room. As the officers rushed into the place a man at one of the tables fell forward and breathed his last. He had died of heart disease; and it was discovered that the five cards crumpled tightly in

his right hand, were *three jacks and two red sevens*.

A little later there appeared in *The New York Recorder* the story of a man in Texas who was slain at a gaming table. It was discovered that he also had held the fatal hand of jacks and red sevens. For several months this fatal hand left its trail of gore all over the West. Either fiction was approximating fact, or else the imagination of a lot of writers was playing with superstition.

Another of Mr. Cook's stories was entitled "Peter; A Study in Red." This yarn, published in *Munsey's Magazine*, told of a dam thrown across a canyon in Arizona for the purpose of impounding the waters of a stream so that gold hunters might mine the river's bed. One night the dam "went out," several laborers were drowned and a safe containing \$30,000 in nuggets and "dust," was swept from the company's office and never afterward found.

The lost safe would afford material for a story, but Mr. Cook's imagination worked differently with this broken dam and the resulting flood. A Maricopa Indian called Peter gave his mount to a white girl, daughter of the superintendent of the mining company, and while she galloped to safety Peter remained to die in the surging flood.

Peter, his pony and the white girl were evolved out of Mr. Cook's imagination. Nevertheless, *six years later*, the following letter from the Maricopa Indian Reservation was sent to Mr. Cook in care of the F. A. Munsey Company:

"Dear Sir:

"I have often read the account of my father's bravery, and how he saved the life of the beautiful white girl when the Walnut Grove dam gave way. I have kept the magazine, and whenever I feel blue, or life does not go to please me, I get the story and read it and take heart to make the best of my lot and pattern after my father.

"I have long wanted to write you, and now I have done so. I am back from the Indian School at Carlisle, and am impelled to send you this letter of appreciation and thanks for the story about my father.

"Yours truly,

"John Peter."

"Now," Mr. Cook wants to know, "what are we writers to make of all this?"

# What of the Business Magazines?

BY TREVE H. COLLINS

Editor Wholesaler Salesman

A LOT of otherwise bright-minded people are breaking their hearts and ruining a lot of good bond paper trying to write fiction when they might be making considerable money doing stuff for the business magazines.

I do not mean to infer that trade-paper work requires less gray matter than does the quantity production of fiction. As a business paper editor I lean rather the other way, although previous to becoming a member of this much-looked-down-upon branch of the editorial fraternity I was a freelance fiction-smith selling regularly to *Peoples Home Journal*, *Top Notch*, *Action Stories*, *North West Stories*, *The Danger Trail* and others.

The foregoing is mentioned merely to forestall the charge that I am in the trade-paper business because I was a complete flop as a producer of salable fiction.

Few writers—outside of those who get their bread, butter and struggle-buggies by reason of their work for the business press—have bothered to keep posted on the trade-paper situation. To most scribblers, a trade-paper is something thrown together with a paste-pot and shears, a copy of Joe Miller's *Joke Book*, an encyclopedia and a few greasy, dog-eared reference books.

That may have been true at one time, but the business press has come a long way since then and every trade-paper editor worth his salt is buying the best stuff he can lay his hands on and at the highest rates his budget will stand—generally a cent a word or better.

He is in exactly the same position as any other editor: If he doesn't produce something that will interest intelligent people, they won't read it, and if they don't read it nobody'll advertise in it, and if nobody'll advertise in it. . . .

I guess we needn't belabor the point.

The business paper editor, then, is buying material he feels will interest a pretty critical type of readers and he is putting the stuff on pages that are as attractive as he can possibly make them.

We of the Heatherton publications are great believers in the appeal to the eye. That is why several of the artists whose work you see on the covers of *The Saturday Evening Post* are frequently commissioned to do covers for our magazines. Haskell Coffin, Eugene Iverd and Alan Foster among them. While not all trade papers go in for art-covers, most of them have long since passed the stage when a jig-saw border filled with advertising "cards" is the first thing that greets the subscriber's eye when he rips the wrapper off.

All our inside-page material is illustrated in wash, line or by photographs. We maintain a high-priced art department and supplement the photographic work of our own cameramen by photos bought from the large news syndicates and concerns specializing in a high type of illustrative material.

The business paper has become a vital force in the commercial world. It is responsible for much of the education and growth in the industry it serves. It conducts far-reaching campaigns of which the public never hears, even though that public benefits greatly thereby.

The type of men being drafted for trade-paper work is steadily growing higher and it is inevitable that this should be reflected in the magazines they are putting out.

Salaries of business paper editorial staffs compare very favorably with those paid similar workers on the average magazine. But let's get back to the writer who's doing fiction without any very great success.

Just why does he stick at it when he might be able to make a good living writing for trade papers?

Because—in many instances—he regards trade-paper work as beneath him. He'd rather starve to death in the fiction field than earn his bread and butter working for a business magazine.

And if the analysis is pushed a bit deeper, he looks down on the business paper because he has gathered from other scribblers that it is the thing to do, and has never bothered gathering—and studying—a bunch of trade papers to find out for himself if they're as bad as they've been painted by a lot of people who know as little about them as he does.

The crux of the whole matter is that the business paper has been woefully neglected, not only by writers themselves, but by the editors of magazines going to writers.

"Fiction!" is the cry and articles about writing fiction fill our writers' magazines.

If somebody does happen to write an article about business-paper article writing,

it has been set in type as small as can be had without threatening permanent injury to a reader's eyesight and stuffed into some out-of-the-way nook where it can't possibly do any harm—or good.

The business paper field doesn't deserve a rough deal like that. It is supporting many able writers and enabling a number of them to earn from \$6000 to \$15,000 a year.

I am glad *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* has inaugurated a business paper department, and I am glad, too, that the National Association of Business Writers has come into being.

Information has reached me that there is a movement afoot to establish an institute to train people for the business writing field much as the schools of journalism seek to teach their students the various branches of newspaper publishing. That's a good move, too. Success to it.



## TIMELY HINTS ON PREPARING COPY

**M**ICHAEL J. PHILLIPS, editor for the Keystone Publishing Company, 312 Twelfth Street, Los Angeles, sends to correspondents the following terse hints for the preparation of copy. They are sound and generally applicable—well worth the study of a trade journal writer or news correspondent:

"Mr. Williamson, of a Los Angeles firm of wholesalers," is sloppy reporting. "John N. Williamson, vice-president of Independent Growers' Association, 412 Wall Street, Los Angeles," is the way it should be.

Don't "mister" a man when you give his initials: We approve "Charles N. Clark," or "Mr. Clark," but we loathe "Mr. Charles N. Clark."

Use the character "&" only in firm names. Never write "Mr. & Mrs. Brown." Write it "Mr. and Mrs. Brown."

We prefer that the numbers from one to nine be spelled out in your copy; but where there are two figures or more, use the numerals. One, six, eight, but 12, 15, 126, 7271, 136,000. Exception—dates of the month.

Don't slather a lot of stars and dashes through your copy.

Always double-space copy. Don't leave your sentences hanging in the air. Put in a period and start over. Make your sentences and your paragraphs short and snappy.

Bulbs, vanuncula, roses, handbags, zinc oxide,

and similar nouns are *not* capitalized. *But* the scientific names of plants are.

I abhor "etc." "Roses, violets, asters, etc., are plentiful" is bunk. "Roses, violets, asters, and other varieties are plentiful" is better.

Don't do this: "There were 19 representatives of the trade present, Mr. Whoosis reported." In such a sentence you have put a weak phrase last. Always put that qualifying or explanatory phrase first: "According to Mr. Whoosis, 19 representatives—"

Always add the state to the name of each town or city you mention. Exceptions: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Portland, Seattle and Denver. (Note that this covers only the West. The list would be extended to large cities wherever located, in the national field.)

Make your verbs agree with the subject in person and number. "John E. Carey Company" is singular. But "John E. Carey & Company" is plural. Never say "The company are preparing to—" "The company is preparing to expand" is proper. But if you say "Carey & Company expect to double the size of their plant," don't go on and add "This firm are one of the best known in the northwest," for you have changed your subject, Carey & Company, (plural) to "This firm," (singular.)

Never "kid" anybody unless you know it will be all right with the subject. Be light, breezy, airy and colloquial, but don't be "fresh." Have your facts, but sugar-coat 'em.

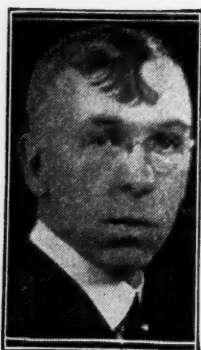


# The Mechanics (and Kinematics) of Web-Work Plot Construction

BY HARRY STEPHEN KEELER

PART IV. THE WEB-WORK PLOT.

XXII



H. S. KEELER

A TRUE web-work plot consists of a plot structure in which many or all of the 15 Elemental Plot Combinations described in Part III appear combined and recombined one with the other, and all, of course, in the same narrative.

On pages 18 and 19 of this issue of *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* appears a complete diagram or graph of the mystery novel "The Voice of the Seven Sparrows" (by Harry Stephen Keeler) which appeared serially on both sides of the Atlantic and likewise as a book on both sides, being issued by Hutchinson and Company of London and E. P. Dutton and Co., of New York.

Our diagram, as seen in the black numbered spots (the unnumbered crossings of threads do not count; they are merely due to our having to use a sheet of paper to represent characters moving three-dimensionally) emphasizes that the novel contains 80 markedly deviative incidents which change the destiny or course of one or all of the participants therein, either immediately or subsequently.

We also find that the novel contains 34 plot threads—some active, some passive—of which 18 figure in the plot both antecedent to the opening of the actual narrative, as published, and the course of the narrative itself; 7 appear only in the antecedent

conditions; and 9 appear only in that portion of the plot which develops after the story has opened.

It will be seen (by the typewritten scale at the top of the graph) that the plot structure lying back (to the left) of the opening of the story (39) covers 500 years from the incident (1) which serves as an opening gun for the creation of the plot. It will likewise be noted that once the story opens (39) it requires from then to the close (80) exactly 4 days 15½ hours.

It might be of interest also to note that one plot thread consisting of two steel garden spades (entering 17 from 14, and thence into 18) is carried from 18 to 35 as an idea only, which at 35 is transmogrified by one of the villains into a symbol or deuce of spades; indeed, into a great number of such!

It may be noted from the graph alone that several incidents—notably No. 17, a wreck on the Pacific—deviates 5 vital characters into 5 channels, different from those they were already in, presenting thus a quintuple variation of Elemental Plot Combination No. X.

Just as one plot thread was, for part of its course, an idea, so does another plot thread consist of a purely abstract conception, namely the Chinese game of Yeng-San, which, changing the destiny of humans and itself being changed and affected by outside factors (i. e. being banned by the Chinese government) constitutes a thoroughly conventional plot thread.

It will also be noted that the heavy black line represents not only the "viewpoint character," Absalom Smith, the hero, but the story itself. The events are viewed through his eyes, and the reader as a rule has no

cognizance of what has taken place elsewhere until Absalom Smith, in some certain incident, learns of it.

In the key to the graph (in small type below), the opening incident of the narrative, number 39, is given the bold-face letter A to indicate that it is the first to be brought under the reader's scrutiny. The incidents thereafter, as they actually take place before the eyes of the reader, are in turn lettered B, C, D, etc. The unlettered incidents lie outside of the viewpoint character's progress, and are brought to his (and the reader's) attention only indirectly, through the mouths of others, or by direct abortive lapses from viewpoint.

The chart does not show at what exact point in the story a character becomes aware of an old incident in the *plot*; that is, while I can show how in actual time Beatrice Mannerby's creation of the spurious Ng Yat newspaper story (30) occurs two months prior to the opening of the narrative, I cannot show how Absalom Smith, the hero, learns of her little bit of feminine ingenuity only almost at the end of the narrative, i. e. in incident 75, where Beatrice, now technically under arrest, tells what she did. But I will endeavor later to give a principle or two covering this ever-present problem of story presentation.

### XXIII

**B**EFORE going briefly into the specific matter of how all web-works are started, including this one, it might be well to preface such a question with a few remarks as to the philosophy and general methods of such composition.

In the first place, why a web-work anyway?

Is not the following explanation of it wholly acceptable? Aside from normal interest in dramatic happenings, is it not true that in every human being is a longing—an instinctive hunger—to believe that life, in its great complexity and utter meaningless involvements, *does* move in a regulated manner; that it is not all incoherent, all mixed up and utterly without pattern, but that the whole thing is mathematically accurate in its causes and effects? We see it proved frequently in small limited relationships and we often call such proof "poetic justice."

But on the large stage represented by years, oceans, continents, and infinite numbers of reactions between people, the thing is not so susceptible of proof.

Life, on the larger scale, though full of effects which are the direct results of causes, is apparently plotless. It is too complex. There has never yet appeared in life a casual relationship involving even 80 incidents and 34 strands that can be as unified as one artificially created. And it is this artificial relationship, this purely fictional web-work plot, this bit of life twisted into a pattern mathematically and geometrically true, that fills the gaps in one's spirit which rebels at the looseness of life as it apparently is.

"Should one aim for plot or for story?" I give you this answer: The author should imagine himself as possessing, so to speak, a near-sighted eye and a far-sighted eye. The near-sighted eye should watch the developments being built into the story and concentrate on its job, for this is the story which the reader is going to follow before the curtain begins to lift and show him the web-work plot back of it all. But all the time the far-sighted eye must be watching two things: First, will the developments in the story help to weave a more structurally satisfying plot? Second, will the plot as thus far built help to provide interesting developments (in the story) for the near-sighted eye to concentrate upon?

Naturally a change in story may necessitate a change in plot, or vice versa; with every change, some distortion of the whole structure may take place. The web-work at times literally seems to quiver like a sea of jelly. Every tap of the hammer makes a dozen changes necessary. But gradually as both the story and plot develop together, it becomes more and more stable, till finally it is *as near perfect as it can be made*.

The story intrigues the editor, but the plot sells it to him.

### XXIV

**T**HERE is, sticking forth in every web-work plot, the crumbling relic of a preliminary structure that to the technician marks the initial simple structure—or move—from which the entire plot was created. And sometimes, too, this structure is so admirably preserved that the terrible seesawings and agonies of the plot-maker have not

destroyed its pristine beauty and classic lines!

This brings us to a statement of a mental process which eleven years ago was first enunciated by this writer and was named by the publisher of *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* "The Keeler Law." It was then stated in a form calculated by this writer to give it mathematical definiteness (and a headache to the non-mathematical) and because I am still hoping for some royalties from Mr. Emerson, owner of Bromo-Selzer, I will re-state it as it was stated in 1916. It ran, as I phrased it:

In conceiving a story or inaugurating a plot which involves threads weaving with threads, if the thread A, or viewpoint character, should figure with the thread B in an opening incident of numerical order "n" (with respect to the incidents in the conditions precedent) there must be invented a following incident " $n + 1$ " involving threads A and C; an incident " $n + 2$ " involving threads A and D; an incident " $n + 3$ " involving threads A and E; and so on up to perhaps at least " $n + 4$ " or " $n + 5$ "; and furthermore "n" must cause " $n + 1$ "; " $n + 1$ " must cause " $n + 2$ "; " $n + 2$ " must cause " $n + 3$ " etc.

Because already I am beginning to feel shaky about the possibility of receiving those Bromo-Selzer royalties, or even a free bottle, I will re-state this "law" today, after eleven years, as the following simple rule:

When you create a (web-work) plot you will have to begin the creation with a short row-of-bricks plot (as described under Elemental Plot Combination No. XIV) which may remain intact or which may proceed to derive itself from the subsequently invented structure by any of the other 14 elemental plot combinations.

In 1922 Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, in his "Fundamentals of Fiction Writing," attacked the above stated law as "the last word in formula." It is more than possible, of course, that Mr. Hoffman misconstrued the statement of the law as supposedly declaring that a plot must definitely be built in that way, rather than *that the mind must follow that formula only in initiating the plot*. If he did not thus misconstrue it, my chief defense to his allegation that "this is the last word in formula" is that it has brought many thousands of dollars into my till; many books and magazine serials out under my name; and many hundreds of newspaper reviews in papers in America, the British Isles, New Zealand, Australia, British India

and South Africa. As editor for many years of a magazine devoted to adventure stories—and *Adventure* was one of the most successful and profitable magazines ever issued, as well as one showing that a popular magazine may attain a real dignity—Mr. Hoffman has been confronted with plots that are prolongations of Elemental Cases II, III, XIIIa and XIIIb, and XIV, varied by entanglements here and there with one or another combination. Whereas the law I have stated refers to web-works. And if he will tell me how one may create a set of complicated yet correlated dramatic relationships without deriving them from an initial set already created, I will be glad to learn of it. If he can make of me furthermore sufficiently a gambler in a literary sense that I will work out a number of initial incidents in the optimistic hope that the rest of my plot will provide the entire compulsion for these incidents, he can invest me with a great deal of courage which I do not have: for when it comes to time and energy, I want—and so do you, I believe—in case invention fails and balks, as it so frequently does, to have the structure on which all else hangs sound in itself, able to stand on its own feet, depending on nothing and nobody for its compulsion.

But let us get down to examples. You may, as time goes on, watch all stories. For the present, the closest story at hand is the one that has been graphed and to which there is a printed key on page 18.

## XXV.

IF you will note carefully, Absalom Smith, the hero, is brought successively and quite early in the narration, into an encounter with six or seven other characters of some importance in the structure. Each of the first incidents brings him into relation with a new (to the reader) character. In No. 39 he receives a \$1000 offer, subject to certain provisions, from Snell, *City Editor of the Argus*; in No. 40, he visits Monte van Tine, a young clubman; in No. 41 he has an encounter with "Sam Barker," his enemy, on the steps of the Argus, in which he foolishly drops a hint that he has an inside tip to things. In No. 42, he calls on Ambrose Smith, his brother, to try to get a loan to reach New Orleans and follow his tip; in No. 43, his father gives him every-



thing he has in the world to reach New Orleans; in 44 he calls on *Albert Wick*, an acquaintance, to make certain arrangements about his mail. In No. 45 he receives a (supposed) *photograph of Beatrice Manerby* whom he is trying to locate. Thus, one after another, his path has been made (by the author) to cross the paths of a number of very actively functioning factors in the plot, and also a few which proved (for the author) to be nearly "duds." Yet had the author not made these crossings, he would not have had even the nucleus of this web. And the philosophy of these early crossings is—or should be—obvious. It is necessary (in initiating the plot) that the viewpoint character make a number of rapid crossings with other characters or threads, so that they may be gotten into the network—so that the author may begin to weave! Just so sure as the strands are kept down by not sufficient crossings in the beginning, there is nothing to weave with—or else the web-work will be no more complex than the pigtail down a little Dutch girl's back. In this story (the serial form) the narration opens in the first paragraph establishing Absalom Smith's point of view. In the next six hours, seven incidents involving him take place, each introducing a different character or object. Thus and thus only is thrown into existence a set of strands by which the weaving of that which is to lie ahead of the story is to take place, and also that which is to follow. I was many years discovering this fact, but only a few days in discovering the philosophy of it. I have found that unless one deliberately projects a number of characters in quick succession into a story, one will flounder helplessly in trying to build up a web-work.

It should be emphasized here, however, and before we proceed a step further, that in the final manuscript, as completed by the author, the narrative may not necessarily open at the point where this preliminary invention or row-of-bricks "trial plot" was begun, even if this original row-of-bricks structure has remained unchanged, as so frequently happens. The opening curtain may ultimately be placed back of all this, or it may be placed midway in it, in which case some of the incidents in this row-of-bricks plot will lie in the "conditions precedent."

But we will later clarify all these points of a highly important principle, by actual demonstration.

## XXVI.

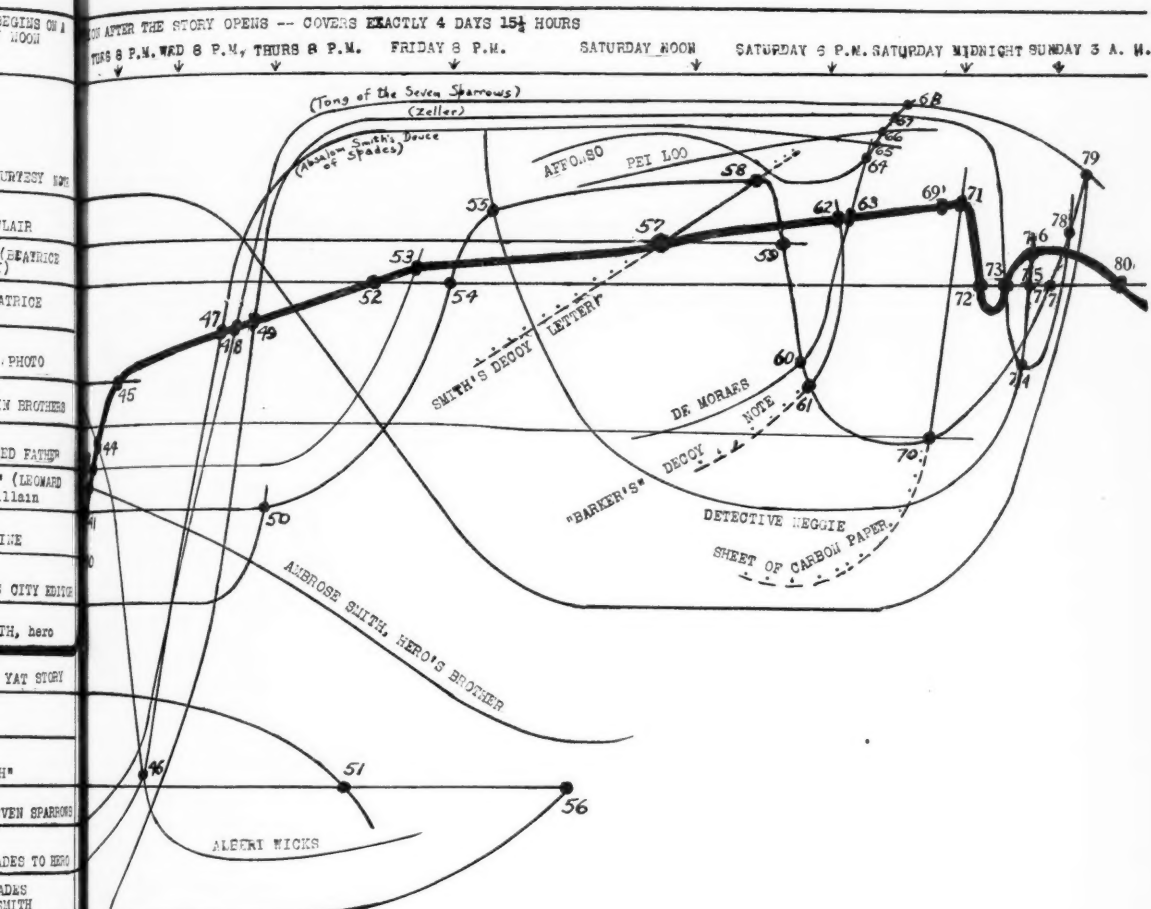
Why, someone asks, must each incident in this preliminary half dozen be a direct resultant of the previous incident? That is because at this point there is no fully developed set of incidents back of the "weaving board" (the opening of the story) from which any of these early incidents may be derived by the process of invention; nor is there any later plot either. It is, in fact, from this early "invention" that all else is woven, to the left, to the right. Therefore it must stand on its own feet, since it supports the webwork, not the webwork it; and since it may prove impossible to derive any of its incidents from the portion of the plot that covers "conditions precedent."

In "The Voice of the Seven Sparrows," tracing up this causation and comparing it with certain crude notes and diagrams on pieces of manilla paper still in the author's possession, it appears that only two incidents were re-derived: that is, the original plot notes show that the young newspaperman gets the offer (39); to try and make a loan, he goes to his friend, the young clubman who gives him the tip and the story of how he was doublecrossed in lieu of a loan (40); therefore he goes to the villain to have it out (41); having in his anger dropped a tip to the villain he goes reluctantly to his successful and sarcastic brother to make the loan (42); being refused, he goes with equal reluctance to his partly paralyzed father to make the loan (43); having got it, he goes to a friend and arranges for having his mail forwarded to New Orleans (44); he then digs up a picture of the missing person (45).

This "beautiful" structure got altered by the plot which was woven to create it, but not so badly altered but that it still looms up indisputably as the preliminary organization of incidents from which the 80-incident affair must have been evolved. It is because through the lightning-like sifting and cementing and eroding process of invention this structure often partly vanishes, leaving only its ruins, that Mr. Hoffman describes the "law" as the last word in formula.

(Continued on Page 21)





## THE VOICE "THE SEVEN SPARROWS" AND KEY TO THE GRAPH

17. Ship wrecked and crew take to lifeboats. We find Wong, Zeller, "X. Y." Smith the translator, and Cropston the banker in one boat. Also the two steel spades being used as oars. (Five threads are deviated by this wreck and therefore attempt has been made by the use of broken and dotted lines, etc., to differentiate the many threads going into and out of this incident.)
18. Wong and "X. Y." Smith kill Cropston (and his son, an unnecessary thread) with the two spades, while Zeller looks on, becoming as it were a witness to a murder.
19. In dividing up the Bank of England bills found on Cropston, Wong gets the \$150,000 "courtesy" note, endorsed in blank.
20. Zeller is left to die on Calaya Island in the Pacific, and is tricked out of the \$66,000 share given him voluntarily.
21. "X. Y." Smith is transferred to a sealer, which goes on to the Arctic after transferring him to an unknown boat. This separation is a vital incident, as it motivates much of Zeller's later actions.)
22. Wong, having separated from "X. Y." Smith, reaches China.
23. Monte Van Tine, a friend of Beatrice Mannerby in Chicago, snaps her photo on the Country Club steps. (New thread is born.)
24. Wong goes broke.
25. Wong gets a job on the Chicago Leader, in Chicago, under the name of "Sam Barker" and is referred to thus in the Key, after this.
26. Monte Van Tine is gotten into a secretaryship to Joseph Mannerby (by Bee Mannerby).
27. "Barker," as a reporter, does grave injury to Pansy St. Clair, a musical comedy actress.
28. "Barker" doublecrosses Absalom Smith, a brother reporter, out of his job on the Leader. (Note: This is a different Smith than "X. Y." Smith, the Oriental translator, and is, moreover, the hero.)
29. Mannerby orders Beatrice to skip to Hudson Bay and hide, to throw lawsuit on the "courtesy note" far enough off so that he can renew his mortgage.
30. She has an ingenious idea of her own, however, and through a newspaper friend in South America creates a spurious Ng Yat news story which says that Ng Yat is coming out on the East Coast, thence to New Orleans and then home. (We may say that involved in this incident is also her departure for Chinaman's Block, New Orleans, where she becomes "Sarah Fu," a "half-breed," as far as the rest of the characters know.)
31. Wong, still as "Sam Barker," gets a berth on the Argus, a rival paper in Chicago to the Leader. (We may say that his getting aboard is an incident with Snell, city editor.)

32. Zeller, getting away from Calaya Island, reads in a paper in Frisco the spurious Ng Yat story and evolves an idea to locate Smith and blackmail him.
33. Zeller goes to Matthew Fosgrove, a photo-engraver of New York, and learns that he can print a cryptic Chinese message, presumably from Wong, and addressed to the unknown Smith, many times through the use of a zinc etching.
34. Fosgrove takes the Chinese copy to Sing Lee, his laundryman, who copies it but deceives him as to the translation.
35. Zeller crystallizes the idea of the two spades used in the murder, to 14,000 two's-of-spades (playing cards) to go to all the Smiths in the Eastern half of the U. S. A., each bearing this Chinese message, supposedly from Wong and offering to sell his share of the English bank notes. (We are interested only in the two plot threads thus created: one, the card intended to reach the real "X. Y." Smith; the other, the card which subsequently reaches the hero, Absalom Smith. The one thread has become twins!)
36. Sing Lee notifies the T'ong of the Seven Sparrows that Leonard Wong, known to have gotten \$200,000 in the murder, and wrecking the bank which held their funds, is sending out a message from No. 1129 Chinaman's Block, New Orleans.
37. Absalom Smith's paralyzed father gets a supreme court decree settling his suit for an old broken ankle, leaving him a residuum of \$150. (This is the money which later is to carry Absalom Smith to New Orleans.)
38. Wong, or "Barker," makes a deal with the Plottkin Brothers to sell them the \$150,000 note "dirt cheap." (But they must locate the girl co-signer to defeat the contest against the note.)
- A 39. Absalom Smith, a penniless newspaper reporter, strikes Snell of the Chicago Argus for a job, but receives only an offer of a thousand dollars if he can locate Beatrice Mannerby, merely as a news-story.
- B 40. Absalom is sent for by Monte van Tine, who merely wants to help Smith get his old job on the Leader back. Van Tine tips him off about Sarah Fu, of New Orleans, knowing Beatrice Mannerby in Paris, and about "Barker's" doublecross.
- C 41. Full of wrath, Absalom goes to have it out with "Barker," and in his excitement foolishly drops a hint that he has an inside track to Beatrice Mannerby.
- D 42. Now realizing he's got to get to his quarry ahead of "Barker," he goes to his brother, Ambrose Smith, to get a loan. (He does not get it; but the incident is used, however, since in it Ambrose arranges with him to read "novelty copy" for his "Japanese King" oil well. When Absalom later, in incident 47, receives his deuce-of-spades, he thinks it is part of this "copy.")
- E 43. On account of his brother's refusal to help him, he goes to his paralyzed father, who gives him his settlement check for \$150 as a stake to reach and live in New Orleans.
- F 44. With everything now O. K. he calls on Albert Wicks, occupying his joint flat, and instructs him to forward all his mail.
- G 45. Just before leaving he receives at his lodging house a false picture, that of one, Courtney Shale's sweetheart, due to a mistake of a hotel clerk in carrying out Van Tine's orders. (The reader believes all along that this is Beatrice Mannerby's picture; and thus "Sarah Fu's" real identity is covered.)
46. Wicks forwards to New Orleans a cryptic deuce of spades with Chinese writing on it.
- H 47. Absalom receives it. (Thinks it is Japanese novelty copy from Ambrose.)
- I 48. He is "picked up." (His trail) by (spies of) the T'ong of the Seven Sparrows who are watching the house where Beatrice Mannerby is living upstairs, and Zeller downstairs.
- J 49. In like manner, he is "picked up" by Zeller, watching from the first floor, who elicits by a trick his production of his two of spades.
50. "Barker" is despatched to New Orleans on the Mannerby case by Snell, of the Argus.
51. The mystery Smith—"X. Y." Smith—reads the spurious Ng Yat story at some unknown place and time, (placed here on the graph in lieu of any known time.) This prepares for his collapse later, in incident 56.
- K 52. Absalom calls on "Sarah Fu."
- L 53. Absalom gets a wire from his father that "Barker" has left Chicago for New Orleans and "to step lively."
54. "Barker" calls on "Sarah" and makes a huge offer for Beatrice's whereabouts. She refuses.
55. Due to her refusal, he arranges with Neggie, a snide detective agency chief, to arrest "Sarah" Sunday at 2 A. M.
56. "X. Y." Smith, the Oriental translator, dies of heart disease in Cleveland on receiving his two of spades, but only after burning it. (Note: Two threads end here by destruction.)
- M 57. Absalom makes a trick letter with Miss St. Clair to discredit "Barker" on his paper. (Note: New thread starts here, but so that it can be seen by the reader, in spite of its shortness, it is projected as a dash-and-dot line.)
58. "Barker" steals the trick letter.
59. Because of its contents, he calls on Pansy St. Clair and accuses her of being Beatrice, but soon sees through the trick.
60. Having seen through the trick, "Barker" calls on De Moraes, a Brazilian shipmate, and by a trick induces him to agree to kidnap Absalom and take the latter to Rio de Janeiro.
61. "Barker" writes a decoy note, presumably from "Sarah Fu," ordering Absalom to come to old Cemetery No. 1 at 7 P. M.
- N 62. Absalom receives this decoy note and goes to the graveyard.
- O 63. Absalom is kidnapped by De Moraes (i. e. by his gang).
64. De Moraes orders Affonso, a sailor, to take Absalom's papers to "Barker."
65. Affonso thus gets Absalom's two-of-spades.
66. He gets a translation of the card in Brazilian, from Pei Loo, a Brazilian Chinese cook.
67. Affonso, thinking number 1127 Chinaman's Block is a "bootleg joint," goes to Zeller's who gives him a valise of moonshine to quiet him down.
68. The T'ong kills him, thinking he is getting away with the stolen Bank of England notes. (He is reported by radio as being Absalom Smith, who later, on board ship, hears of his own death.)
- P 69. Sailing, a prisoner, for Rio, Absalom swims for the Belle of Dixie excursion steamer and makes shore.
70. "Barker" writes a letter in duplicate to the two Plottkins, detailing his plot to send "Sarah" back to China, and tells of his progress in getting rid of Absalom, but leaves in his wastebasket a badly jumbled sheet of carbon paper. (New thread.)
- Q 71. Absalom gets into "Barker's" hotel room, and, straightening out the jumbled carbon, finds that "Sarah" is going to be shipped back to China by legal machinery hitherto unseen. (Barker's cablings to the French prefect are not shown as they merely constitute an Elemental Plot Combination Case XV, and the results are not actually put into execution.)
- R 72. Absalom offers marriage to "Sarah" at 1 in the morning to prevent her deportation.
- S 73. Zeller holds up Absalom and "Sarah" in her quarters, to find the name of the "X. Y." Smith he is convinced Absalom is representing.
74. Neggie, arriving to force a showdown, arrests Zeller.
75. And then "Sarah."
- T 76. And then Absalom! (This makes a problem of how the hero can get the true story out to Beatrice's own paper.)
77. "Barker" now arrives by schedule and proceeds to "save" "Sarah" from the wrath of the deportation law.
78. But he is identified by Zeller as Leonard Wong, the murderer, since the two are now brought face to face for the first time since incident 20, where they parted.
79. "Barker," in fleeing, as a result of this identification, is riddled with bullets by the agents of the T'ong outside who have worked out his identity by certain scars on his wrist. (Note, however, that the \$150,000 "courtesy note," the crux of all this trouble, and in a bag around "Barker's" neck, is also in this incident, and is thereby destroyed through being cut into ribbons and bloodsoaked to illegibility from the avalanche of bullets.)
- U 80. Absalom and "Sarah"—or Beatrice now—plight their troth, as the Victorians might have it, she loving him because he asked her (in 72) to marry him when he thought she was only a penniless half-Chinese girl. (The story is over so far as Romance goes, and the Realists now commence their novel where this one ends!)



(Continued from Page 17)

As an example of this "vanishing," the author in this story saw, after his preliminary row-of-bricks invention, that there were too many "goings to get a loan" with the consequent danger of monotony from using the same motive. In fact, there were three such. So he reduced these to two (42 and 43), by having the hero *sent for* (40) by the young clubman as a result of the latter's having been a private secretary (26) and knowing all about a certain "doublecrossing." As a result of another change of derivation, he had the hero *receive* (45) the picture of the missing girl, through a certain sub-plot, instead of digging it up, and moreover was thus enabled to foist a spurious photo on the reader and cover up the identity of the heroine. Still further, to demonstrate how that part of the plot which evolves from the initial "row-of-bricks" (to the right) can change an incident therein, the refusal of the loan by the sarcastic brother (42) is made to drag in certain additional matters concerning a Japanese oil well and playing cards, etc., which prove very advantageous to the later plot. For an incident, like a human being, can be "fat" or "skinny."

But because this preliminary structure as originally invented by the author was a perfect row-of-bricks in itself, following the law stated, had none of these things come up, had none of these changes been made, it could still, in a sense, have thumbed its fingers to its nose as far as the world was concerned, and could have supported the entire 80 incidents.

## XXVIII.

Yet could this law, you ask yourself a little skeptically, be after all the beautiful theory of a theorist? As I write this part of the series on web-work plot, I step into the adjoining room off my studio and tear from the morning *Chicago Tribune* the synopsis of Louis Tracy's story "The Woman in the Case," running in the *Tribune*. I have not read the story, and probably never shall, but let us see what we shall see:

### SYNOPSIS:

John Arden, returning to his rooms at the Palace Hotel, London, in the early hours of the morning,

breaks his key in the lock and is given a room in a luxurious suite by the night watchman, who assures him that the rooms are untenanted. He is about to retire when two women enter the apartment. One is addressed as Esmee and the other as Mrs. Sinclair. Arden, hiding, hears them speak of the sudden death of Lord Farndale. Without being observed he lets himself out of the apartment. The next morning he reads of the mysterious death of a peer. A little later he sees Esmee on the street and is not far from her when she is knocked down by a motorcycle. Her dress is torn and he offers her his raincoat. She accepts it and he offers to get her a taxi, telling her that they live in the same hotel. She tells him that she and her aunt have left the Palace, but says she will drop him at the hotel.

Now following this only for the first half of the above paragraph, you will note that John Arden, or thread A, crossed in succession a series of threads: B, a night watchman; later, at the same moment, C and D, Esmee and Mrs. Sinclair; and, through overhearing their conversation about a certain Lord Farndale, a thread E; and you will also note that A crossed B because A lost his key: and A crossed C and D because of B giving him certain rooms, and he crossed E through overhearing the conversation between C and D. You will notice you have not seen an old plot-master like Louis Tracy having two women discuss philosophy, cake-baking, or kiss-proof lipstick at a time when he is working at high pressure to get threads into his story, namely Lord Farndale, who if he is really dead will obviously function no further in the following part of the plot, but who (from parts of the synopsis I have later seen) has evidently been very actively used in the conditions precedent.

But one of my readers who has been kind enough to read the proof thus far on this series and has accepted the statement about the necessity of creating the preliminary psychological structure, asks how this preliminary structure existing in "The Voice of the Seven Sparrows" itself came to be invented, instead of some other structure following the A, B — n, n + 1 law, etc. And although such explanations involve to some extent dramatic considerations, on which subject a book also could be written, I am glad to follow the thing out exactly as found on those manilla notes filed away in a desk drawer.

(To be Continued)

## THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S

# LITERARY MARKET TIPS

### GATHERED MONTHLY FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES

*Love Mysteries*, Robbinsdale, Minn., will supercede *Love Affairs Magazine*, one of the Fawcett group, after January 1, 1928. D. E. Lurton, associate editor, writes: "There is an immediate need for 3000 to 5000 word stories of strong love and mystery plotting. Mystery must not be too involved, and love interest must play the major part. Weird and unnatural stories wanted when they depend on this effect primarily for interest. We particularly want stories of gangland and underworld love mystery, high society intrigue, and detective fiction with a strong love element. We will consider serials of four or five installments of 5000 words to the installment. Love mystery fact articles generally on assignment, but synopses and letters with suggested ideas for articles will be seriously considered and promptly answered. Payment at 1 cent and up promptly on acceptance. Speedy decisions assured."

*Sunset Magazine* will be under a new management after November 1. Lawrence W. Lane is to be publisher and managing editor; Lou F. Richardson and Genevieve A. Callahan, editors. These are all former members of the *Better Homes and Gardens* staff. The editors write: "We will be in the market for garden articles with personal experience and 'how to' slant, written for and by Westerners. Articles on building, decorating, upkeep of home, foods and household management are also acceptable. Articles of general interest to Westerners will be considered if the subject matter has not been reshaped. In preparing material for this magazine please remember that *Sunset* will be edited to appear to Western home people. Articles should not exceed 1500 words and photographs must be sharp and clear. Rate, 1c up on acceptance. Address, *Sunset Magazine*, San Francisco, California.

*Plain Talk*, 225 Varick Street, New York, Evelyn Light, associate editor, writes that it should be included in List A of the quarterly Handy Market List. "Our rate is not less than one cent a word, and we pay on acceptance," she states.

*Air Trails*, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, a new member of the Street & Smith group, has appeared on the stands. Short-stories and novelettes of the air are featured—no serials. Some filler is used. Thrilling adventure is the keynote. Payment for material is understood to be at rates of 1 cent a word or better on acceptance.

*Popular Magazine*, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, is now edited by Richard Merrifield and Philip Conroy. The experiment of publishing it weekly has been dropped, and it is being published semi-monthly as before. The editors write: "We are interested in out-of-door, adventure, business, mystery, fiction—strong stories for masculine readers, with a romantic flavor, if possible. Short-stories should be from 5000 to 7500 words, novelettes from 40,000 to 50,000, and serials from 70,000 up. We are well supplied with the latter at present. Stories of feminine, juvenile, domestic, or rural interest are out of our line. Very little verse is purchased. Payment is on acceptance at good rates, and all except first and second serial rights are released to the authors."

*Over the Top*, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, is the new Street & Smith monthly war-story magazine. It uses short-stories and novelettes, but no serials. Payment, it is understood, is at rates of 1 cent a word or better on acceptance.

*The Pennac News*, Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, official monthly publication of the Penn Athletic Club, "is broadening its editorial content so that it will not be a strictly athletic magazine, and is now in the market for articles, both humorous and serious; storyettes and poems," writes Harold L. McClinton, editor. "The word rate ranges from a cent and a half to three cents and a half and poems will be paid for at the rate of one dollar a line. Payment is on acceptance. Contributions need not deal altogether with athletics, although athletic subjects are preferred. The magazine goes to men, the majority of whom are well-to-do and well educated, and to the women in their families. Contributions should appeal primarily to men—that is, the love and lingerie element should be minimized. Storyettes and articles should be of a thousand words approximately, and should not exceed 1500 words unless they are exceptionally good. Poems should contain about 24 lines and should be of the hit-the-line-hard, play-the-game-fair variety."

*Modern Mechanics*, Robbinsdale, Minn., has been selected as the name of the new scientific periodical to be issued by Fawcett Publications. It desires no fiction, but is interested in illustrated short articles on mechanical subjects.

*The Open Road for Boys*, formerly at 248 Boylston Street, is now located at 130 Newbury Street, Boston.



## Two Thousand Dollar Prize Contests

*Stories from 2,000 to 3,000 words in length*

For Boys and Girls in their "teens"



### BOYS' WORLD CONTEST

First Prize	\$400.00
Second Prize	250.00
Third Prize	150.00
Fourth Prize	100.00
Fifth Prize	100.00

### GIRLS' COMPANION CONTEST

First Prize	\$400.00
Second Prize	250.00
Third Prize	150.00
Fourth Prize	100.00
Fifth Prize	100.00

All other stories found available, fifteen dollars a thousand words.

1. Contest closes November 1, 1928. Stories received after that date will not be entered in the contest, but will be considered in the regular way.

2. Stories should be from 2,000 to 3,000 words in length.

3. You may enter as many stories as you like in either or both BOYS' WORLD and GIRLS' COMPANION contests. Send stories as early as possible in order to insure careful reading.

4. Leading characters should be boys from 16 to 18 years of age for the BOYS' WORLD, and girls from 16 to 18 years of age for the GIRLS' COMPANION.

5. Stories should be something more than incidents or adventure tales. They should have good plot, quick action, suspense, and heart appeal. The elements of mystery and humor are recommended.

6. Only stories of a high literary and moral standard will be considered. Virility, but not cheap melodrama, is wanted. Crime or criminals should not be featured in a prominent way.

7. There should be involved in the plot a typical conduct or faith problem of boy or girl life.

8. The problem (or message) should have to do with true character development, rather than mere bravery or achievement. It should bring out the expression of Christian faith or principles in action.

9. The conventionally goody-goody story is not wanted. Appeal to the best in the modern boy or the modern girl. Deal with typical problems which interest or trouble him or her. Look for new problems and situations growing out of a study and understanding of youth. Picture the hero's struggle and victory for the right in a way to win the admiration of the reader. Keep to the boy or girl standard of fair play.

10. The mere suggestion of romance, taking up the nobler phases of the boy's companionship with the girl and the girl's relation to the boy during the teen years, has a place especially in the case of the GIRLS' COMPANION. Actual love making and so called "sexual problems," however, are taboo.

11. The following types of stories are suggested: Bible times, missionary, historical setting, pioneer, legendary, school life, home life, athletics, adventure or exploration, science, farm or ranch life, semi-romance, and mystery.

12. Stories involving the organized Sunday-school class or church society are especially desired.

13. Stamped self-addressed envelope must be enclosed if you wish manuscript returned.

14. Address stories for BOYS' WORLD to BOYS' WORLD Contest, David C. Cook Publishing Co., Elgin, Illinois. For GIRLS' COMPANION, to GIRLS' COMPANION Contest, David C. Cook Publishing Co., Elgin, Illinois.



Sample copies sent free on request.



*Cupid's Diary*, 97 Seventh Avenue, New York, one of the Dell Publishing Company magazines, is now edited by Henry Altemus, who writes: "I am anxious for some fresh material: good, clean, dramatic love stories, written with the following essentials in mind: These stories are addressed largely to young girls (16 to 18) who work for a living, who are inarticulate, and who look to fiction for romance which they hope to but cannot realize in their own lives. Every story should be, fundamentally, a wish fulfillment. The reader should be able to identify herself with the heroine: it is *she* who marries the hero, who rises to wealth and happiness from her lowly station, who snatches the handsome youth from the arms of the unworthy heiress. Our readers are unsophisticated and elemental, and the stories should deal with elemental things: love, jealousy, intrigue, struggle against environment, against handicaps. The plot may be involved, but the theme should be simple: *An upward struggle toward love*. If there is a mystery, it should be a love mystery. If there is a battle, it should be a battle of love. Love, in short, is your tuning fork. Aim at the heart rather than the head, and write sincerely, simply. Bear in mind: if you don't believe, your reader won't. I am particularly friendly to stories of girls who are misunderstood and unappreciated and who come through gloriously, stories that will console a girl in the face of her disadvantages, that satisfy her hunger for beauty and adornment and romance in realms beyond her. I also like stories that flatter the obscure type of girl. This is not an inflexible formula. It is merely a guide. Any good love story that stirs the fundamental emotions and has the ring of sincerity will be very welcome. Warning: avoid the jewel theft plot." *Cupids Diary* pays from 1 to 2 cents a word on acceptance.

*Fame and Fortune Magazine*, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, a newly launched Street & Smith publication, "offers a market for short business success stories of youthful appeal," writes Ronald Oliphant, editor. "The stories may be in any setting or background or line of work in which fame and fortune may be achieved, although the story of the boy who comes to a big city and makes his fortune will be featured. The length of stories is from 3000 to 5000 words. Our rate of payment is 1 cent a word for all rights."

*The Detective Story Club, Inc.*, has been organized with offices at 11 E. Forty-fourth Street, New York, to distribute to its clientele detective stories selected by a committee of five from manuscripts and proofs submitted by publishers. While this offers no direct market to writers, it is likely to stimulate interest in detective fiction and to result in the purchase of more manuscripts of this type.

*The Christian Herald*, formerly at Bible House, is now located at 419 Fourth Avenue, New York.

*The New York Evening Graphic Saturday Magazine Section*, 346-364 Hudson Street, New York. M. Bredenk, editor, writes: "We do not want any short material whatever. Manuscripts should be at least five pages (typed) long, with the human-interest element uppermost, preferably with a romantic touch or the element of hair-raising adventure, dire peril, sex interest, and other elements that go to make a bully yarn. Needless to say, facts and not fiction are wanted." One or more photographs required with each article. Payment is at a flat rate of \$15 for 1400 to 1600 words and \$30 for a double spread of around 3000 or more words with two or three pictures, on publication.

*Short Stories*, *West*, and *Frontier Stories*, Garden City, New York, of the Doubleday, Doran & Company group, are all on the lookout for good air stories, writes Harry E. Maule, editor. He adds that *Short Stories*, and to a lesser degree, *Frontier Stories*, can use a great many more war stories. "*Short Stories* can use flying novels, novelettes or short stories with emphasis on plot and adventure. As usual with *Short Stories*, a love interest is no barrier. They can deal with flying in any of its aspects; the war, the Mexican Border, the air mail, commercial flying, exploration, or the extensive use of airplanes for many purposes both business and official. For *Short Stories* tales of the war can be novels, novelettes or short-stories—strong in plot and action. Shorts may be either serious or humorous and this magazine is not afraid of a reasonable amount of convincing soldier vernacular. For *Frontier Stories* the air stories should deal with the frontiers of civilization on land or sea; otherwise the same general requirements as above will suit. For *West* Western air stories are particularly suitable, owing to the growing use of airplanes for all purposes in western North America. Air stories are not only appropriate but they also offer a welcome change from the straight Western story which has showed a dangerous tendency to become stereotyped. There is a grand opportunity here for quick sales."

*The Woman Athletic*, official publication of the Illinois Women's Athletic Club, is now located at 820 Tower Court, Chicago. Edna I. Asmus, editor, writes: "As for our editorial needs, we desire smart fiction up to 5000 words, and articles on all subject matter, interesting primarily but not exclusively to women, from 1000 to 3000 words in length. Good verse is also acceptable. I would like to have it emphasized that *The Woman Athletic* is a quality publication and that it reaches a very choice reading public." Payment for material, it is understood, is at from ½ to 1 cent a word on publication.

Mail addressed to *American Pioneer Tales*, 1403 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago, is returned by the post office with the notation "Not Found."



# Are you blindly groping for words to fit your thoughts?



"What word conveys the exact shade of meaning I desire?"

"Is there a better word than the one I am using?"

"What is that word I have forgotten?"

"Is there a word in the language which expresses my thought clearly?"

"How can I avoid this constant repetition?"

STRANGE, isn't it, with all the marvelous wealth of our English language that you should find yourself groping blindly for the answers to such word questions as those above.

Strange, with a language so full of expressive words, that it should be so difficult to find the ones that express your thoughts clearly.

With more than 150 words describing various shades of beauty, or over 400 words denoting various degrees of goodness, for instance, why should it be so hard to find the best one for your purpose?

Yet it is not strange either, when you consider that dictionaries are arranged on the assumption that you know all of the more than 200,000 words in the language and seek merely their definitions—that all attempts to make the language available stopped with merely listing the words by ideas, and then not always in alphabetical order.

No wonder the average working vocabulary is less than 2500 words—that you find it so difficult to express your thoughts and your most powerful ideas become mere vague impressions in the minds of your listeners or readers.

But now comes a new book which revolutionizes word helps—a book which finds the words for you, and at the same time defines them. Now you can have at your very fingertips the definite, living words that fit your thoughts and leave no doubt as to your meaning.

The illimitable wealth of words from which the ablest writers and speakers draw—the whole living language—becomes your working vocabulary through the remarkable invention and eighteen years of untiring effort by a master of words, which gives you **March's Thesaurus Dictionary**.

## It places the whole living language at your instant command

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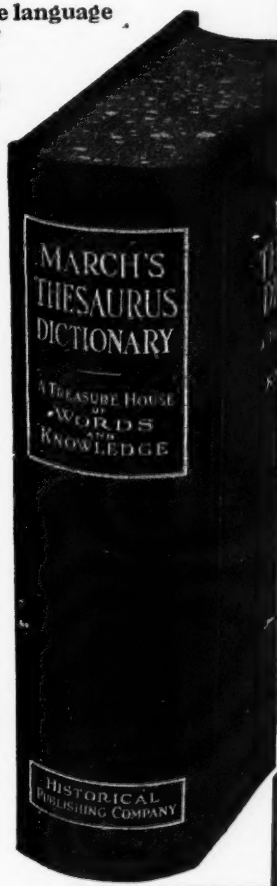
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*Top Notch Magazine*, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, George Briggs Jenkins, editor, writes: "We would like to have short short-stories of not more than 900 words. We want action and adventure in them, and prefer an outdoor setting, though no locale is barred. They must be real stories, containing in themselves a complete dramatic incident." In a later note Mr. Jenkins adds: "It seems surprising that writers continue to submit stories to *Top-Notch* in which all or most of the characters are women. Also we often receive sentimental love stories. Would-be contributors have been asked again and again to read at least one copy of *Top-Notch* before submitting material. From the stories we receive, they are not doing so. We suggest that perhaps this should be brought to the attention of the readers of THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST."

*Texas Pioneer*, 801 West Bulberry Avenue, San Antonio, Texas, "is intensifying and broadening its field with its fall issues," writes D. J. Wooding, editor. "As a magazine of Southwestern life and action, we are in need of sprightly told articles dealing with this rapidly expanding section. The only test we put to material is whether or not it is newsy and interesting. We like stories of the old Southwest, true tales of the winning of the Southwest, and particularly those which contrast the Southwest of today with the old. Articles should not exceed 2500 words. Articles about South Texas are particularly welcome at this time, and we can use good fiction right along. Fiction should not exceed 3000 words; Western, detective, business and air stories, preferred. This stuff must be briskly written about a well-defined hero or heroine. Payment will be made immediately upon acceptance, at a modest rate, to be arranged with the author."

*Heart of the West*, a new monthly published at 2481 Sixty-third Avenue, Oakland, Calif., will use all kinds of Western material, fact and fiction, but announces that manuscripts submitted by members of the California Writers Club will be favored. It is not stated whether payment will be made.

*Cabaret Stories*, 1860 Broadway, New York, is temporarily out of the market, pending the outcome of an injunction suit brought by the Macfadden Publications, against its publisher, B. L. McFadden. The suit relates to the use of the slogan, "a McFadden Publication," in connection with the magazine.

It is reported that Burton Rascoe, former editor of *The Bookman*, is to be editor of a new magazine which will make its appearance about the first of the year. It is to be "a popular highbrow weekly," according to unofficial statements.

*Youth's Companion*, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, is overstocked with adventure stories and articles on hand.

*The Chicago Daily News*, 15 N. Wells Street, Chicago, uses short-stories of 800 to 1000 words, but is pretty well stocked up on 1000-word sentimental stories, writes Hubert W. Davidson, feature editor. It seeks no serious verse or long fiction, though an occasional serial is purchased. Payment is at approximately 1 cent a word on publication for short-stories, \$1 to \$5 for jokes, \$1 to \$4 for short humorous poems, and \$1 for epigrams. "Space is very tight, and there is a tendency to cut down on features," Mr. Davidson states.

*The Kendis Brockman Music Company*, 145 West Forty-fifth Street, New York, writes: "Would you be good enough to advise your readers, when submitting manuscripts to music publishers, to send them flat and not rolled? Also to enclose stamped, addressed envelope to insure prompt return of manuscript if found unavailable. Although few, if any, of the larger publishers bother much with manuscripts submitted by new or unknown writers, we would be pleased, at our convenience, to examine them, provided the job is not made too difficult."

*The Young Churchman*, 1801 Fond du Lac Avenue, Milwaukee, "should no longer be listed as overstocked," writes Pearl H. Campbell, editor. "While I am not laying in a huge supply, still I do purchase material now and then." Material for boys and girls from 10 to 15 is used. Payment is at moderate rates on acceptance.

*Woman's World*, 4223 W. Lake Street, Chicago, buys for its "Postman's Whistle Department" short dialogue jokes, "short cuts" for the home, recipes, etc.—a variety of stuff of 25 to 100 words each—for which it pays 50 cents each on acceptance. Address the department.

*Progressive Teacher*, Morristown, Tenn., uses articles of not over 500 words on educational topics. M. S. Adcock, editor, writes, "We wish practical articles dealing with methods, projects, and administration of education, also plays and material for special days of school. Payment is on publication at \$1.50 per printed page."

*College Life*, 56 W. Forty-fifth Street, New York, N. L. Pines, editor, sends a call for "smart, sophisticated, snappy stories with a decided sex interest. The story must be well written and packed full of running action, with a polished continuity of theme leading up to a strong climax. We do not want an elongated incident stretched out for five to six thousand words. First and foremost, the story must have a collegiate background, and must be sincere—and do not forget the sex element. But, the sex must not be cheap and vulgar; it must be handled with finesse and deftness."

*The Canadian Magazine*, 347 Adelaide Street West, Toronto, Ont., Canada, does not pay for jokes, according to a note from the editor to a contributor.

## THE AUTHOR &amp; JOURNALIST'S BUREAU OF LITERARY CRITICISM

## Types of Fiction in Demand

A Series of Short Discussions of Present-Day Manuscript Requirements.

## III—THE LOVE STORY

**M**ATING of opposite sexes for preservation of the species is one of the most distinctly elemental phases of life. With this theme predominant in nature, and omnipresent through the animal kingdom, it is inevitable that it should be the predominant theme in fiction. Love as an emotion, an instinct, a moving force, a motive, is at least an incidental factor in the majority of stories, and a vital factor in an exceedingly large proportion.

The love story as a distinct type is one in which romantic love constitutes the major element of interest. It usually can be reduced to a problem in which a man in love with a woman (or vice versa) seeks to win her love and in doing so must overcome certain obstacles. The obstacle may be a rival, difference in social or financial positions, antagonistic characteristics, lack of opportunity, parental objections, or the like.

Broadly speaking, all stories involving the desire of the male to possess the female (or vice versa) fall in this category, but when the object sought is an illicit relationship or temporary gratification of desires, the story usually is classed as a sex story. When the obstacle to a union is moral or legal (for example, if one of the lovers already is married, or if they are blood relatives), the story usually is classed as a problem story.

The conventional romantic love story deals with a normal, healthy desire to win the love of a person of the opposite sex—"object, matrimony."

The love story requires a delicate touch and considerable finesse. It should arouse the reader's emotions, and yet must not "slop over" or become too thickly sentimental. A great deal must be brought out by suggestion. A prominent editor is quoted as saying that not more than four men in the United States are capable of writing a satisfactory love story. The delicacy of touch required for such stories is perhaps more frequently found among women than among men writers.

The markets for stories of all lengths involving love as a major, or at least as an important, factor are legion. Most of the magazines devoted to Western and adventure themes prefer to have the love element eliminated. Practically all others use such fiction when it has the necessary qualities for their audience, from the literary magazines such as *Atlantic Monthly*, *Century*, *Scribner's*, and *Harper's*, through the popular general magazines such as *Saturday Evening Post*, *Cosmopolitan*, *American*, *Red Book*, *College Humor*, and *Collier's*, and the love theme predominates in the fiction found in women's magazines, such as *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Delineator*, *Woman's World*, *Woman's Home Companion*, *People's Home Journal*,

etc. There is a group of love-story magazines in the all-fiction field, including *Love Romances*, *Love Story Magazine*, *Cupid's Diary*, *Love Mysteries*, *Romance*, and *Sweetheart Stories*, using glamorous romantic themes. Love stories of "sexy" type are desired by *Young's*, *Breezy Stories*, the confession magazines, and some others.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST criticism department endeavors to give helpful hints on adapting love stories to specific types of market. Plot suggestions are given where needed, and weaknesses of characterization (an all-important factor in such stories), are carefully analyzed.

(Next month in this space: "The Juvenile Story.")

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3,000 to 4,000	3.50	8,000 to 9,000	6.00
4,000 to 5,000	4.00	9,000 to 10,000	6.50
Each additional thousand words above 10,000	.40		
Thus:			
15,000 words	\$ 8.50	60,000 words	\$26.50
20,000 words	10.50	70,000 words	30.50
30,000 words	14.50	80,000 words	34.50
40,000 words	18.50	90,000 words	38.50
50,000 words	22.50	100,000 words	42.50

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*Black Mask*, 45 W. Forty-fifth Street, New York, has for its main theme detective fiction "of a new type, avoiding the older formula sort of detective story," writes Joseph T. Shaw, editor. He adds: "I hear echoes of *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* from many sections; it seems to be widely read. I wish I could get over clearly to those who have us on their list the purpose we are seriously trying to work out in this magazine. In addition to detective fiction we use also some Westerns, border yarns, and adventure tales. Requirements are for swift movement, a strong sense of reality, and with clean, virile action used as the interpretative and descriptive medium. Short-stories range from 3000 to 6000 words, novelettes up to 15,000 words. Payment is at 1 cent a word up, on acceptance—good prices for short-stories thoroughly adapted to our needs."

*The New Republic*, 421 W. Twenty-first Street, New York, sends the following statement of its requirements, over the signature of Bruce Blivens: "Short articles, preferably of about 2000 words, on current social, political, and economic questions. It also welcomes sketches of about the same length, which portray interesting aspects of American life. It uses a limited amount of verse, which must be of exceptional quality. All material should be prepared with an intelligent and adult audience in mind. Payment is made on publication, and at a basic rate of 2 cents a word. No illustrative material is used."

*Secrets*, 104 W. Forty-second Street, New York, emphasizes mother-love, father-love, and self-sacrifice themes. Natalie Messenger, editor, writes: "The primary quality that we want in our stories is pathos. Short-stories should be about 5000 words; novelettes, 7000; serials should be of two or three parts, 4000 words each part. Payment is at 1½ cents a word, verse 25 cents a line, on publication." *Pep Stories*, under the same editorship, desires "live, snappy, racy stories. The collegiate angle is always effective. Keep them young, bubbling with life and excitement, and full of colloquial expressions." It prefers short-stories of 2000 to 3000 words, novelettes up to 4000 words.

*The Children's Buddy-Book*, 93 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, formerly *The Buddy-Book*, D. E. Bushnell, editor, mentions a special need for good, wholesome humor. It is edited for younger children, and uses scientific articles, short-stories up to 1500 words, serials of interest to boys and girls of eight and nine, and educational and instructive-page novelties. Payment is on publication at 1 cent a word for solicited material, variable rates for unsolicited material.

*California Revue*, Beverly Hills, Calif., has been consolidated with *Game & Gossip*, Los Angeles.

*The Queen's Work*, St. Louis, is no longer in the market for manuscripts.

*Triple-X* and *Battle Stories*, Robbinsdale, Minn., both need straight trench war stories, and also are in constant need of air-war and artillery stories. *Triple-X*, although primarily Western, is now using one air-war, one cowboy war, and one straight (trench) war story in each issue. It also needs boxing stories at present, the editors write. For *Battle Stories*, Jack Smaley, assistant managing editor, gives the following preferences in order: "Tales combining air appeal with front line action; straight aerial dog-fight stuff; trench and no-man's-land stories; navy battles (between men, not ships); spies and counter espionage; Foreign Legion; submarines and conveys; raiding parties; prison camps, and humorous yarns. (The reason we put these last is because we won't get many; it's hopeless!) We don't require American heroes; British or Canadian heroes are welcomed. No women. And don't kill the hero. Any length, from a thousand words up to 25,000. The best rule is to write your story without padding, taking the shortest distance between the points of the narrative, letting the length determine itself. Serials should be at least three parts, generally dividing at 15,000-word lengths. Payment is from 1½ cents a word up. 'Up' is no idle boast, either."

*The P. F. Volland Company*, Joliet, Ill., publishers of juvenile books and greeting cards, in a letter from Margaret H. Raymond, assistant editor, says: "We have our book plans laid for 1929 and enough manuscripts on hand to make up our 1930 line. However, we are always on the lookout for unusual manuscripts suitable for picture books, toy books, and novelties, and we never receive realistic stories of unusual merit in the same proportion as fairy stories and imaginative material."

*The Book League of America, Inc.*, 66 Fifth Avenue, New York, plans to publish a magazine entitled *The Book League Monthly*, in each issue of which a complete new book will be published. The announcement states: "These books will be selected for publication by our editorial board of eminent writers, critics, and educators." It will publish, in addition to the complete book, sketches, essays, and articles of general literary interest, as well as news and comment about books and authors.

*The Gentlewoman*, 615 W. Forty-third Street, New York, is chiefly interested in short-stories of 5000 words or less, writes Marion White, editor. These should be love and action stories appealing to home women in small towns. Confessional stories especially are not desired. Payment is made on publication at \$5 per thousand words.

*College Life*, 56 W. Forty-fifth Street, New York, sends the note that "cover ideas will be paid for at \$10 for each one accepted."

*The A. B. C. Magazine*, Rockford, Ill., is overstocked.



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*Photoplay*, 221 W. Fifty-seventh Street, New York, offers a \$1000 first prize, \$500 second, \$350 third, \$150 fourth, five prizes of \$100, and ten of \$50, for best solutions to a serial, "The Studio Murder Mystery," by the Edingtons, commencing in the October, 1928, issue. Solutions must be submitted between February 15 and March 10, 1929, and are to be written in 200 words or less. Full details of the contest are published in connection with the first installment.

*The National Anthem Competition*, Room 2017, 342 Madison Avenue, New York, has been announced by Florence Brooks-Aten. A first prize of \$3000, second of \$1000, and ten of \$100 each, with honorable mentions, are offered for the words and music of a new national anthem. A preliminary contest for words only will be held, with ten prizes of \$100 each. This preliminary contest closes October 15, 1928, while the final contest closes February 1, 1929. Intending contestants must register their names, and on doing so will receive further information about the contest. Poems and musical compositions are to be submitted anonymously, the composition being accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the name and address of author. The words and music may be the work of an individual or of two persons.

*Draper-Maynard Co.*, Plymouth, New Hampshire, announce: "We will pay \$100 first prize and \$50 second prize to those who select an All-America Team for 1928 (football) closest to that named by Grantland Rice in *Colliers*, when published. All selections must be mailed to Draper & Maynard and bear an originating postmark not later than November 26, 1928, or before Grantland Rice's choice is published. All entries must include a brief account of your reasons for your selections. Only one entry for each person. If selections are identical, preference is given the one received first by the Draper-Maynard Co. Ask your dealer for official selection blank or send to factory direct."

*American Poetry Magazine*, 358 Western Avenue, Wauwatosa, Wis., offers a prize of \$25 for the best poem in each issue, with frequent additional prizes. No other payment is made for verse.

*Poetry, A Magazine of Verse*, 232 E. Erie Street, Chicago, has more than doubled the amount of its awards to be given this year, according to a recent note. In November it will distribute \$1200 among deserving poets, including \$500 to "some poet of distinction or distinguished promise."

The "Rejections of 1927" contest conducted by Doubleday, Doran & Company, 244 Madison Avenue, New York, will close on December 1, 1928, instead of October 1, as at first planned, according to Charles H. Baker, Jr., editor of this anthology, who is in charge of the contest. The contest is for letters stating which is the best story in the book and why, and which is the poorest story and why. Letters may be any length, and contestants should mention *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST*, as a special contest is being conducted for readers of this magazine, with prizes of \$25, \$15, and \$10. Address Mr. Baker as above.

*Overland Monthly*, 356 Pacific Building, San Francisco, offers a prize of \$200 for the best first novel by a present resident of California, who has lived there for three years or more. The length limit is 40,000 to 70,000 words. A 6000-word synopsis must be submitted first. From the outlines submitted the judges will select the six averaging highest in points to be judged, and will then pass upon the full-length novels. Pen names must be signed. Further details may be obtained by addressing Novel Prize Contest, *Overland Monthly*.

*Motion Picture Magazine*, and *Motion Picture Classic*, 1501 Broadway, New York, offer regular letter prizes of \$15, \$10, \$5 and \$1 on topics announced in the magazines.

*True Story Magazine*, 1926 Broadway, New York, states: "Can you produce a real, brand-new joke? Not one you invent, but a joke from real life. We'll pay 2 cents a word, and not less than \$2, for any real laugh we print. Material found unavailable will not be returned. Send contributions to 'Laughs from Life.'"

*Secrets and Pep Stories*, 104 W. Forty-second Street, New York, conduct regular "best letter" contests, prizes ranging from \$10 to \$1.

*Three Minute Cereals Company*, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, offers prizes of \$500 to \$5 for letters pertaining to use of Three-Minute Oat Flakes. Three questions must be answered: 1—Why do children prefer Three-Minute Oat Flakes to any other cereal? 2—Why is Three-Minute Oat Flakes so good for children? 3—Why should your grocer sell Three-Minute Oat Flakes? Contestants may submit any number of answers. They must be on standard size letter paper—8½ by 11 inches. The answer must give contestant's grocer's business name and address. Entries close at midnight, November 30, 1928.

*The Open Road for Boys*, 130 Newbury Street, Boston, offers prizes of \$3, \$2 and \$1 for best photos submitted each month. Photos are judged on interest of subject, artistic qualities and clearness. Address: Photo Contest Editor. The Open Road also uses a page of short jokes in each issue, paying \$1 each. Address: "Read 'Em and Grin."



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Springfield, Mass.

# Trade, Technical and Class Journal Department

JOHN T. BARTLETT, EDITOR

## GOSSIP . . . LEARNED EAST

**F**RANK Farrington publishes a monthly four-page house organ—*The Hill-Billy*. He circulates about 250 of these. The printing and mailing cost is about \$20 a month. The little publication is philosophical and discursive. The selling note is purposely a mild one. The mailing list comprises house organs, advertising departments, agencies, business paper editors. This writer does considerable special work—for example, a booklet revision assignment, recently, for a prominent manufacturer in the drug field—fee, \$500.

One of the methods of another business writer is a form letter sent to merchants whose store is presented, one way and another, in newspaper pictures. First and last, many window displays receive such local publicity. The business writer seeks the picture from the store, and details.

"Five to ten per cent of those to whom I write comply with my request," he told the department editor.

However, from time to time, a store which can be depended upon for numerous future pictures is developed.

We talked with another business writer who has a small number of connections for which he does much work. For example, he represents as Eastern States editor a group of three Chicago publications. This connection takes him into Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and the New England states—expenses paid. One of his recent investigations was to determine the volume of credit, represented by outstanding balances, which existed in a certain trade in New York. Wild statements, confidence-destroying, had been made. This writer investigated, and got the true facts.

Prestige helps. This year one business writer goes before the "Mike" for a weekly 30-minute discussion of current books. He is not compensated by the station, but establishes a position for himself with a considerable territory. "I enjoy this weekly book-talk," he told the department editor, "and find that I can talk extemporaneously—in fact, an informal, flowing manner, adds, I believe, to the effectiveness of a radio talk. In tangible ways the work has helped me. For instance, I received a monthly assignment, at an excellent rate, to handle book reviews for a business publication, as a result of this broadcasting."

On the following day we talked with a business writer who frequently appears as speaker before Rotary, Kiwanis, and other merchants' clubs. He talks on salesmanship. He obtains the engagement

without difficulty, simply by writing a few letters.

Each talk, he told us, brings him conversations, full of good material, with listeners who approach him to discuss special points.

□ □ □

## Literary Market Tips

### In the Trade, Technical, and Class Journal Field

*The Plumbers and Heating Contractors Trade Journal* and the *Wholesaler and Salesman*, 239 West Thirtieth Street, New York, "would like to get in touch with good news correspondents in Washington, Oregon, California, and Colorado," writes Treve H. Collins, editor. "Although we are primarily interested in straight news material, there would also be a chance to pick up feature stuff which brings a considerably higher rate."

*Sporting Goods Illustrated*, 616 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, "buys only photos with captions, showing sporting goods store interiors or windows—they must be on first release," writes Ames M. Castle, editor. "Payment is on publication or within thirty days of acceptance at rates depending on the character of the photos."

*Money Making Plans*, 2212 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio, is announced as a monthly circulating among readers of church organizations, which can use short articles giving outlines of original supper plans, entertainments, games, stunts, ideas for bazaars, and decoration schemes. It will pay ½ cent per word on publication, according to W. G. Price, editor.

*Sales Tales*, Mount Morris, Ill., Sam Spalding, editor, writes: "We find ourselves just now most in need of strong, practical, interesting articles in interview form, about men or women who are selling anything successfully in their spare time or in full time, from house to house, office to office, or store to store, et cetera, not for resale. Such articles should run from 2500 to 3500 words, the shorter the better so long as they are humanly interesting, tell an inspiring story of success, whether in a large or small way, give an attractive earning record, and supply helpful details as to just how this result has been achieved, the methods employed, et cetera. Such articles should be accompanied by a photograph. We offer very little market for fiction at this stage, having enough on hand for some months to come, so far as short-stories are concerned. However, we would be glad to correspond with writers who may care to



# THE S. T. C. NEWS

A Page of Comment and Gossip About the  
Simplified Training Course and Fiction  
Writing Topics in General

VOL. V, No. 10

OCTOBER, 1928

EDITED BY DAVID RAFFELCK

## PLEASED

### Newly Enrolled S. T. C. Students Find the Training to Their Liking

An unusually large number of persons have just enrolled for the Simplified Training Course, further testimony of the growing recognition of The Author & Journalist training throughout the world. Never before has the S. T. C. worked with so many writers, never before have its instructors been so well equipped to give personal, practical training.

It is interesting to note the enthusiastic response of the many new S. T. C. students while still working on the assignments of the first lesson group. Below are printed excerpts from letters of a few students:

"I received my first lesson group, and would advise anyone that even thinks he can write to get the S. T. C. I am an old man, but I believe I can now write stories that will sell."—B. F., Ellensburg, Wash.

"I have read over the first lesson group, and to say that I am pleased is putting it mildly."—J. W. B., Denver, Colo.

"The first group of lessons came yesterday and I am delighted with them. The course is going to be very interesting and helpful."—C. W., Minneapolis, Minn.

"I have finished the first lot of lessons and the thing that appeals to me most is Lesson IV, the short-story formula. With this at one's side, I do not see how he can go wrong. It is like following the signposts on an enjoyable auto trip."—F. P. P., Jersey City, N. J.

"I like the first part of your course, and expect a lot from the parts to come. It is my honest intention to use you, and your course, to develop my writing ability into the selling class."—C. C. R., Tonalea, Ariz.

"I wish to thank you very much for your criticism on my first batch of assignments. The more you criticize my work, the more good my course is going to do me. I was quite worried for fear you were going to 'yes' me all the time, but you don't."—Mrs. D. McK., Halifax, N. S.

"Your criticisms of my first five assignments were very encouraging to me. I find it is the struggle element which is so hard for me to handle or to incorporate in my work. However, I will say that I have learned more about this essential of the short-story from a study of this first lesson group than I had any conception of previously. The work is becoming more interesting as I proceed."—H. R. E., Kellogg, Idaho.

"The S. T. C. is splendid, the greatest source of inspiration, and knowledge that I can imagine."—T. L. L., Halifax, N. S.

"After carefully working on the course to this point (assignment No. 9), I feel myself getting a tight grip on the fundamentals of the short-story."—R. E. B., Chicago, Ill.

"The training, I feel, is a great benefit, as it is teaching me to do constructive thinking. I hope all of your groups are as good as the first one."—R. J. S., Santa Ana, Calif.

"Here ends the first lesson. I do not know what sort of work you will think I have done, but I have enjoyed every single bit of it."—Mrs. D. F. T., Brooklyn, N. Y.

## Notes About S. T. C. Students

The assistant advertising manager of one of the largest corporations in the world has just enrolled for the S. T. C.

The assistant attorney general of one of the Southern states became an S. T. C. student last month.

John E. Samson, of Ketchikan, Alaska, is the most recent of the S. T. C. students from the United States possessions.

A newspaper reporter of Amarillo, Texas, who has sold feature stories to seventy leading trade journals and metropolitan newspapers, has just enrolled for the S. T. C.

Ministers find the Simplified Training Course to their liking. A surprisingly large number have enrolled for the S. T. C., finding the work helpful to them in preparing sermons, articles for Sunday School and church papers and in increasing their earnings through fiction writing for the general magazines.

A young writer of Albany, New York, who has sold fiction to Mystery Stories, Weird Tales, Chicago Daily News, and Marriage Stories, has enrolled for the S. T. C. in order to increase his percentage of sales.

A prominent advertising manager of San Francisco, whose poetry was included in Schnittkind's "Poets of the Future," has turned to the Simplified Training Course to secure training that will fit him for success in the fiction field also.

A member of the editorial staff of the iconoclastic Haldeman-Julius publications of Girard, Kansas, has just enrolled for the S. T. C.

A writer living in the queerly named Wyoming town, No Wood, is the latest prominent author to enroll for the S. T. C. training. He expects the course to help him increase his output and reach the leading markets.

A writer of Jersey City, New Jersey, who has sold humorous material to all of the leading periodicals of the country, has just enrolled for the Simplified Training Course in Short-Story Writing. He has sold 30,000 pieces of humor, epigrams, verses, skits and jokes.

## MANY SALES

### S. T. C. Students Achieve Remarkable Record in Selling Stories

Students of the Simplified Training Course are having remarkable success in selling their stories to leading magazines. Never a month goes by but some active or former S. T. C. student is featured on the covers of one magazine or another, and the table of contents of the various periodicals sometimes reads almost like a roster of S. T. C. enrollments.

In the current issues, now on the newsstands, are to be found short-stories and novelettes by these S. T. C. students among others:

"Me an' the General," Three Star Magazine, by R. B. Anderson; "War on the Wing," Wings, by Herman Petersen; "Peaceful Guns," West, John Paul Jones; "Roping the Facts," Triple-X, Dick Halliday; "Anne Spends the Week End," Pep, and "The Price of Love," Love Romances, by Peggy Gaddis; "Goldbricks Front," Triple-X, "Forty Fighting Thieves," Battle Stories, "Sacrifice Island," Over the Top, by Arthur Guy Empey.

Many other recent sales are reported by students.

"I am just in receipt of a check from the Street & Smith Publishing Co. for my story, 'Brand Doctors,' and I got another check last week from another outfit."—S. H. Nickels, Carrizozo, N. M.

"It occurred to me that it might interest you to know that I have a story, 'Basement to Let,' coming out in the September number of Prize Story Magazine. 'Don't Overlook This New Field' appears in Automobile Painter & Trimmer for August or September."—Raymond B. Brown, New York City.

"I thought you might be interested to know that my story, 'Romance a la Mode,' sent you for assignment No. 67, sold to Sweetheart Stories Magazine, in which it will appear shortly."—F. D. Hopley, Lee, Mass.

"Have sold two short articles to Detective Fiction Weekly during this last month. And of course you remember my selling two long stories to True Detective Mysteries, for which I received \$130 and \$115, respectively. In the July issue of that magazine, there was a lovely editorial on page 9 by George William Wilder about my forthcoming 'Hands Up!' story which is to appear in the November issue. 'Kidnapped' will come out later. So you see, I am not flattering the S. T. C. when I say it has helped me. For one thing, it provides that absolute necessity—'writing atmosphere,' which is often so hard to manufacture in one's imagination."—Madeline K. Hannah, Los Angeles, Calif.

Books must follow sciences, and not sciences books.—Bacon.

furnish outlines of proposed two or three-part serials of 2500 to 3500 words in each part. Such serials should follow the one basic idea of a down-and-outer, or one leading a treadmill existence on a small salary or wages, who turns to direct selling on commission in his spare time—or full time if he has lost his job—and who finds himself with a foothold in a new world of opportunity, where money-making is comparatively easy and he is largely his own boss. But such stories, along with plenty of humanly interesting plot incidents, should reflect real knowledge of such selling in some line, so that they will be convincing and carry with them a constructive sales message as well as a lot of inspiration. Very brief articles with photographs, telling about successful salesmen or saleswomen on commission, always stand a good show. We're overstocked with material of a miscellaneous sort, practical in character, which does not play up some individual for the sake of human interest. We pay \$3 each for all prize letters published on eighteen different subjects which we announce from time to time, also \$1 each for three humorous selling anecdotes each month for our Side-Line of Sales Humor, and 50 cents each for as many more as we can crowd in. Nothing without some selling atmosphere is used."

*Independent Salesman* and *Spare-Time Money Making*, 22 E. Twelfth Street, Cincinnati, have been combined, and the subject matter used now pertains only to direct selling and salesmen. The title remains *Independent Salesman*, with the subtitle of *Spare-Time Money Making*. An announcement states: "This magazine is devoted to problems of the direct salesman and agent. We want experience stories of successful salesmen; how a difficult sale was made; how a salesman climbed to the top; articles of inspiration, and those dealing with various sales angles. Occasionally we use poetry with a selling application or of inspiration to salesmen. Our feature articles and experience stories run from 1200 to 2500 words. Shorter articles of from 200 to 1000 words also acceptable, presenting some boiled-down selling point of interest. All articles must deal with direct selling, rather than general selling; house-to-house problems will be of especial interest. Manuscripts reported on immediately; payment on publication." The rate is not stated.

*The Debit*, 2213 Dime Bank Building, Detroit, which announced that payment for articles would be made at 1 cent a word, personality stories at 2 cents, on acceptance, does not seem to be living up to these rates. A contributor reports that he was offered \$5 or ¼ cent a word, for a 2000-word article.

*The Printing Industry*, 81 W. Van Buren Street, Chicago, should be listed as paying from 1 to 2 cents a word for material, on acceptance, writes Magnus A. Arnold, editor. Length limits for articles are from 750 to 3000 words.

*Specialty Salesman Magazine*, South Whitley, Ind., states: "Do not assume because of the title of our magazine that only sales stories are acceptable. In fact we do not need many articles on sales technique. Most articles about direct selling are written by our own staff. We want anything that will encourage men and women, inspire them to nobler, higher achievement or help them build their characters. If the story is written from a sales slant, remember that our readers are engaged in selling direct to the customer and not in retail stores or by mail. Write for the men and women who go from door to door of home or shop. Payment is made on acceptance at from ½ cent a word up."

*Good Hardware*, and *Progressive Grocer*, 79 Madison Ave., New York, give their present needs as follows: "*Shorts*—articles between 100 and 200 words in length, illustrated by photos, drawings or diagrams, describing stunts, ideas, plans and methods other dealers have used successfully. *General articles*—between 1200 and 1500 words, preferably illustrated by photos, diagrams, drawings, forms, advertising or other material, dealing with successful stores, their methods, and the broader aspects and fundamentals of grocery and hardware retailing, such as credit, delivery, selling, turnover, etc. These articles must deal with the intimate problems of the trade in a practical, sensible manner that will appeal to the hard-headed business man. *Photographs*—Pictures of window and interior displays, unique stores, unique signs, odd motor trucks; anything, in short, in which the retailer would be interested. *Timely articles*—How to sell seeds in Spring; how to pull Christmas trade, and similar seasonal ideas. These articles should reach us well in advance of the seasons they deal with. *Humor*—We are always in the market for good trade jokes for the humor pages of either magazine." These publications pay on an average of 1 cent a word on acceptance, though they sometimes buy only a part of a manuscript, paying only for what they use. Acceptance is often delayed considerably by the editors writing to the persons mentioned in the articles for verification of details.

*Poultry Tribune*, Mt. Morris, Ill., listed as paying 1 cent a word on publication, is reported by a contributor to have paid under ½ cent a word for a short article.

*Highway Builder*, Third and State Streets, Harrisburg, Pa., uses articles on subjects of interest to road and street pavers.

*The Sporting Goods Dealer*, Tenth and Olive Streets, St. Louis, Mo., seems to be "slow but sure" in its payments. It recently paid ½ cent per word for an article submitted more than eighteen months ago. The editor suggests that prospective contributors write first, giving an idea of story in mind.